

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HCJ

Support person present: No

1. My name is HCJ. My date of birth is 1961. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in the family home at , Edinburgh. My mother's name was and my father was I was brought up by my step-dad I used that surname until I was eleven and a half or twelve years old, until I went to secondary school.
3. I have nine brothers and sisters. I come from a broken family, so we didn't all live together. I can't tell you their exact ages but the oldest is who is around seventy or seventy-one. is next at about sixty-nine or seventy and I think is sixty-six. I have three older sisters too, they are , who is maybe ten to twelve years older than me, is around four years older and who is two years older. I have three younger brothers who are , who is maybe eight years younger than me, and and . I can't tell you their ages.
4. I think my dad left when I was just born and my mum then met my step-dad. He was a nice guy but it was a difficult time. He took me on from when I was about two years old. So all my older siblings are and my three younger brothers are . Everybody called me HCJ because my younger brothers were that was their surname. We still stayed in There

was my mum, step-dad, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and me, and my two older sisters, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], so I was the oldest boy in the house.

5. I came from a poor family. It's a sad story but there were millions of people in the same situation. My step-dad worked on the railway. He would come home from work on a Thursday night and hand mum a little money from his pay. She would have to live off that for the rest of the week. He wasn't a bad person, just a bit greedy. When he got paid on a Thursday and he was back shift, we had to go up to the railway station at eleven o'clock at night to get money from him for my mum. For what he gave her, I think I gave my mum more. He came home, had his tea and would maybe have a chop and we had macaroni and cheese.
6. When I started Hyvots Bank primary school at five years old I couldn't cope as I was dyslexic. It wasn't diagnosed then. It was a big upset to me. I still remember the first day I went to school. I found it very difficult. I started working when I was eight years old. I worked on a milk float from Monday to Saturday and got one pound fifty. I also worked selling logs on a Sunday from nine in the morning to six in the evening. I was taking twenty-five kilogramme bags of logs round the doors to sell. I got twenty-five pence for this, which in old money was two half crowns. I gave this money to my mum.
7. By the time I went to secondary school I was having major problems with reading and writing. I felt stupid, but I've done a lot of things in my life, I'm not stupid. I didn't know about dyslexia until my daughter went through it. Edinburgh never recognised it, but Glasgow did. I didn't know this until years and years later. I had to take my daughter through there to get tested privately. She has since passed away.
8. I was never a bad person at school. I wouldn't harm anyone, I wasn't that way inclined, I was shy. I was like a tramp, horrible to say but it's true. So I kept myself to myself. I had a couple of pals, we were kind of the same and we used skip school. I went to an adjustment class. I used to get people to read a book to me at night, so that I could try to memorise it. I was put to the back of the class, or put outside, and I didn't have a clue, so I thought, what was the point in going to school. I went to work

at five in the morning and by the time I went to school I was knackered and at night there wasn't much food, you were hungry all the time.

9. I went to Gracemount secondary school and when I'd been there for about four weeks I got blamed for stealing a stopwatch, although I didn't do it. It belonged to Mr [REDACTED] the PE teacher. It was lunch time and I was called to his office. I was very seldom at school because I didn't think I was getting anything out of it. I was working in the Bon Accord juice lorries for extra cash for my mum. So I went up to see him and he said I'd stolen his stopwatch. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about. He started battering me over the head with the edge of a table tennis bat. I ran away and SNR [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED] was walking in and I pushed him out of the way and ran to my mum. Mr [REDACTED] was a big, fit gym guy and I was a small eleven year old. I can't remember if it drew blood when he hit me, but it was very sore.
10. That afternoon I was out with my pals and my mum said, "Come on HCJ [REDACTED] we're going to see [REDACTED]". By the time I got dressed the police came. They were at the front door and the back door. They dragged me away and I was put in the Howdenhall assessment centre for seven months. There was a guy there called Mr EWA [REDACTED] He just lived down the road and he was a nasty, nasty piece of work. He used to punch you all the time.
11. I had been to a few children's panels before the incident with the PE teacher, for skipping school. Even then they never listened to you at the panel. It was four or five people who were all middle class looking at you like you were nothing. No matter what you said, they were always against you. I was making money and not learning, so I thought, make more money and don't go to school. So I went to panels for skipping school. You couldn't speak at the panels. You had to stand there and do what you were told. I remember one time they were shouting at my mum. I shouted, "It's not her fault, it's mine". They really annoyed me. As a man now, they would never treat me like that.
12. Years later I came home from sea and I was in Gilmerton. While I was there I saw some people who had been staff in the homes I'd been in. They said I should never

have been in there, and knowing in your head you had never done what you were accused of, it made it even harder. I also met a guy, I can't remember his name, and he said, "Remember you were accused of stealing that stopwatch?". He was a bit of a snobby guy, he lived in the rich houses. He went on, "I'm really sorry, it was me who took it". I said, "You're kidding". But there's nothing you can do.

13. I used to go to Gilmerton social work department once a week before I went to Howdenhall for a sort of good behaviour report and Sandra Lee was my social worker then. She got married and became Sandra Curly. I couldn't tell you when it was exactly, if it was a year or two before going to the assessment centre.

Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Howdenhall Road, Edinburgh

14. I went to the assessment centre for seven months and a dog is treated better. I remember I went to a panel after the seven months were up and they were letting me out. I had done nothing wrong while I was there, so I thought I was going to get back to helping my mum and get back to school. But this guy, Mr MTQ SNR SNR came in at the last minute and stopped me getting out and I went to Dr Guthrie's for four years. I went back to the assessment centre and went to his office and ended up in a detention cell for three days for questioning why he did that.

Routine at Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Howdenhall Road, Edinburgh

First day

15. The police took me straight to the assessment centre at Howdenhall. I was dragged through the door from the back of a police car. It was bewildering to me. I was eleven years old and I'd never been in a situation like that. When I first went in they weren't too bad. At night time I went to my bed but I didn't sleep. I was frightened at every noise I heard. I was in a dormitory with four guys, all older than me. I needed the toilet and I was told I had to ring the buzzer as we were locked in. A member of staff came and took you to the toilet but kept the door of the toilet open and watched over

you. I thought this was a bit perverted. So you tried not to go to the toilet. A lot of the guys pee'd the bed because they didn't want people standing watching them. When I arrived I was given white sheets so that people would see it if you pee'd the bed. If you did they called you 'Pissy bed', or something like that. So you were humiliated the minute you went in.

Mornings and bedtime

16. There was anything from four to six people in the dormitory. I was in the same room for the seven months I was there. The window was tiny. If there was a fire nobody was getting out of there as you were locked in. There were only boys there.
17. We got up about seven in the morning. We would go for a wash then go downstairs for breakfast. We got corn flakes or porridge. There would be three people sitting on each side of the table and a member of staff at the end. They would have a full breakfast of bacon, sausage and egg. If you behaved they would throw you a sausage, like a dog. I was a kid so it didn't really bother me. In fact, corn flakes was a good meal because I never saw a meal in the morning usually. There was a night watchman. I can't remember if the teachers were there overnight.

Mealtimes / Food

18. Lunch and dinner was like heaven because I'd never ate like that. The food was amazing to what I was used to. At first I couldn't eat everything because it was too much. Everybody in the place were good eaters. The food wasn't bad, I can't lie, but when you look back it wasn't very nourishing. You got spam fritters, but to me that was like a sirloin steak. There were about four kitchen staff and about eight other members of staff.

Washing / bathing

19. I can't remember taking a shower there. The sinks, showers and toilets were in a communal area. There was always staff watching you.

Clothing / uniform

20. I think we wore t-shirts and shorts. The assessment centre provided them and to me they were good as they were new.

School

21. They put me away for stealing a watch or not going to school to better me, but on my first day I played pool. You had like a games room, television room and I was more in that room than doing any school work.
22. We went to school on a Wednesday to learn how to write a letter home. Nobody could do it. You were at it for about two hours then they would say ok, that's it. You'd then make little models all day with plaster of Paris. We also made little pencil sharpeners. I did that all day. You would sit painting them, like you were in a nut-house. They would sell them. The work didn't bother me, I've always been a workaholic. I think it's because I started so young. We didn't get any money for making them but what used to get me was, they had a tuck shop at night and some people would have money in the bank and could buy sweets and juice.
23. There were quite a few people there and different age groups. The youngest was probably about nine to the oldest at sixteen. We had to write this letter, which was to be sent home. I remember writing the letter and I got to, 'Dear mum'. It was probably like a five year old's writing. Nobody said a word about me struggling with it. They might have given us little bits of schooling, but all I remember is making lots of models and playing lots of pool. There was no religious instruction there. From when I left school I had to teach myself to a kind of level that I wouldn't be embarrassed. I'm still at that stage now.
24. I can't remember the teachers name but I remember Mr **EWA** and his wife worked there. She was in charge of the kitchen. He was a nasty piece of work. The only exercise you got there was walking about this yard, which was about twenty feet squared. The gardener was an old Polish guy. I would try to get out in the garden

because the exercise yard was so small. One time I was digging up potatoes and I cut through one and the old gardener battered me over the head with his knuckles. He just kept battering and battering me, constantly. Because of a potato. He could hardly speak English, he was an ex-prisoner of war and he treated us like prisoners. What was bad about the assessment centre was that they locked you up like a dog. I just wanted to forget the place.

Chores

25. We made our bed and mopped and buffed the floors. I think we cleaned the toilets and we worked in the garden, which was a godsend until the nutter of a gardener wanted to batter you. I'm not sure if we did the laundry there.

Trips / Holidays

26. We went on holiday once. I'm not sure if it was up north or out west. It was a little house in the middle of nowhere. We were left there with a man and a woman we didn't know. There were four bunk beds in the house. It was nice but you couldn't go anywhere as it was in the wilderness. They had these gas mantles in the house. We could have set the place on fire. There was no supervision there, we were meant to be these bad guys and they just left us there. There were no other trips while I was at Howdenhall. I liked it but I was glad to leave because the gas mantles made my eyes stream every day. There was no abuse from the couple.
27. I think I was allowed out on three Saturdays and had to be back for seven o'clock on the Sunday night. I worked on the logs to leave my mum some money, but I had to finish at five o'clock to get back in time.

Birthdays and Christmas

28. I think I left Howdenhall round about my birthday, I'm not sure. I think I was there at Christmas. I can't remember anything because I was so distraught not being with my family. I know we didn't get a sweetie, never mind a present.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

29. My mum visited regularly with the kids. My friend [REDACTED], who is still my friend to this day, would come up, but they wouldn't let him in. He told me he would come up twice a week with crisps and juice, but they wouldn't even let him hand it in for me. I stopped visitors coming up because when I thought I was getting out and Mr [REDACTED] spoke up at the panel saying I wasn't ready, I was angry. I remember he told me to go to his office. He was talking to me and I was all dizzy. He told me I was going to a detention centre. If he hadn't come to that panel, or my social worker or my mum were a bit more 'ballsy' I'd have got out then. I think there was one inspection while I was there, but I can't remember anything about it.
30. I was at a few panels. Sandra Curly, my social worker, was a lovely person but she was middle class, doing her bit for society. I never looked at her that way because she was a lovely girl. I remember I went to one panel about the stolen watch. I think it was about a week after going to the assessment centre, but I can't remember it. I was so distraught. My mum was mortified, but she couldn't help me. Her family allowance was reduced with me being in there, so she had even less money.
31. I went out of Howdenhall with Sandra Curly once. She took me out in her Datsun Cherry car. She was a bit like my sanctuary to be honest. We went out and she said, "How are you?", and I said, "Come on Sandra, how am I!". I told her what happened in there and that she did nothing about it. All I was told was to keep my nose clean. She didn't come to see me a lot. I would ask the staff to call her and they did sometimes. I asked her how long I was going to be there and she just told me to keep my head down.

Healthcare

32. I didn't see a doctor while I was there. I went to a psychiatrist but I don't know why. He showed me shapes and things, asking me, "Is this a butterfly?". His name was Dr White. It was in Edinburgh and I was taken there. It might have even been before

going to Howdenhall. There might have been a nurse at the assessment centre, but I'm not too sure. I never saw a dentist while I was there.

Running away

33. I never ran away because it would have only made the situation worse and the quicker I got out, the quicker I could go home to my mum. I'm sure a couple of boys ran away and they were put in the detention cell for three days. They were told, "If you want to act like prisoners, we'll treat you like that".

Bed Wetting

34. I never wet the bed at Howdenhall. You were locked down so I would try to go to the toilet before bed. Some of the other boys wet the bed because they didn't want to go to the toilet and have a member of staff watch them. There was no punishment but they would be humiliated. The way they would speak to them, saying thing like, "Put your sheets over there because you've pished the bed again". The way they said it was really humiliating. You saw the faces of some of the boys, they were demoralised.

Abuse at Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Howdenhall Road, Edinburgh

35. All I was interested in at Howdenhall was getting out. I would put everything out of my mind. At night I'd pretend I was in my own house. Mr **EWA** was in his late thirties to early forties, he was about five foot seven to five foot nine, dark skinned, sort of Greek or Italian looking and he was bald. He was a very straight, nasty looking man, and nasty with it. His wife was the head of the dinner hall. I don't think they had anything to do with the teaching, they were there to look after people in a home and they were allowed to do what they wanted because nobody checked up on them.
36. Mr **EWA** would punch you in the stomach, he would hit people with his keys as well. You then had to crawl with him or it would be an everyday occurrence. He would punch you for no reason, just whenever he felt like it. You could be walking past him

and he would do it. Everybody saw it but nobody did anything about it. We used to say, "I wonder what mood he is in today". When he came in and you knew he was in a bad mood you would do anything to appease him. He was never in the classroom but he always hung around the communal area.

37. I don't know if he bruised me, I never looked for bruising, I was too young. You just felt like you couldn't breathe. He knew what he was doing because if he went too far he knew there would be an inquiry. I told my social worker what was going on and I just got a blank look. He hit a few boys in there. I could name about four of them, but I don't want to name them. There were a couple of guys from Tollcross and I saw him hitting them.
38. I can't remember the gardener's name. He was Polish and about seventy years old. He was bald, small and stocky. I can see him as plain as day. You were delighted to get into the garden at first, you looked forward to getting outside, then what he did was disgusting, and you couldn't tell anyone. He would pound you on the head with his knuckles. I cut through a potato, that's all I done and I got battered. If you planted something wrongly he would do it. I only went out in the garden twice, there was no enjoyment in it. He did it to others too.
39. The emotional abuse was in how they treated you. I believe that to get kindness, you have to give it. It didn't matter to them how you felt, that you were missing your mum, brothers, sisters and friends, they didn't care. Not all of them were bad, but even the good ones would stand by and watch it happen, the swearing at boys, the shouting at you in front of everybody. I even saw staff members walking over and dragging boys away. I can't remember any names except Mr EWA
40. If you did something wrong you would be put in a detention cell with a mattress on the floor. The room had a bullet proof window that you could bang all day and nobody would hear you. They would give you bread and water on a plastic plate and cup, but only when they felt like it, not at meal times. You would be put in the detention cell for things like talking back to them and it would be for a day or two days. You were frogmarched up. I only got put in there once and that was for

answering Mr ^{MTQ} back when he spoke up at my panel. I never normally answered back because I wanted out. I had the run in with Mr ^{MTQ}, ^{SNR} ^{SNR}, for the simple reason that I had done everything they asked me to do in that place. I never once got into trouble. I never spoke back. I actually got home on two weekends, on a Saturday, because I did nothing wrong.

41. Every day in Howdenhall we watched television or played pool. It wasn't supervised but the staff were here, there and everywhere. They wouldn't sit there and watch you, they would come and go. There were only boys there and there were a lot of fights. I never got involved in them, I just wanted out of the place. The staff would come in and break a fight up then leave and the guys would be at it again. I have to say about the assessment centre, I only had a few instances there with Mr ^{EWA} Mr ^{MTQ} the gardener and going to the toilet.
42. The only thing Mr ^{MTQ} did to me was walk into the panel last thing and say I wasn't ready to go home. He hadn't had anything to do with me there. He was just ^{SNR} Mr ^{EWA} was a member of staff and he would punch you in the stomach. I saw him hitting boys with his keys too, a lot of times. He only had a small set, but he hit boys with them a few times. I saw that on umpteen occasions.
43. I was at Howdenhall for about a week and you didn't think about things like this at that age but to me it was a shock. We were watching a spaghetti western kind of film then we were told that the under fourteens had to go out of the room. A few seconds later we were marched back in and they were watching this pornographic film. It was explicit for that time. A lot of the older guys were sexually aroused. I was eleven, all my age group were just really embarrassed. You didn't know where to look, but the staff were all grinning. One of the staff, I can't remember who, said, "Look at the tits on her", and there were female staff there. So you had men and women watching a pornographic film, with kids there too. It was on a film projector at the back of the room. It only happened the once. I never went to watch another film after that. I would play pool or chess

44. Howdenhall was a really traumatic time in my life. It was the first time I'd been taken from my mum, and for what? Being accused of stealing a watch, that I didn't do, and skipping school. And this was them showing me a better life.
45. I saw sexual abuse at Dr Guthries, but I wasn't sexually abused. I saw bits and pieces going on at the assessment centre, but mainly what I saw was cruelty. I remember some of the guys said they were going upstairs, a couple of them at a time and a member of staff would be at the back of them. That used to happen quite a bit. I'd ask what they were doing but they would never tell me. It's only when you look back when you're older. They always seemed to have more cigarettes and more sweets. The cigarettes were Embassy No.6. You were allowed five cigarettes a day but those boys always had twenty, and it wasn't a couple of sweets, it was big bags. I can only surmise what went on up the stairs. I never saw abuse by any other staff at Howdenhall. The assessment centre was a very traumatic time for me. I'd never experienced anything like it before. The only thing I liked about it was the food.

Reporting of abuse at Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Howdenhall Road, Edinburgh

46. I told my social worker what was happening a couple of times, but you were as well not saying anything. You were scared that she told the staff, that was always in the back of your mind, "Have I said too much". I thought she was a lovely person but she didn't have a clue.

Leaving Howdenhall Assessment Centre, Howdenhall Road, Edinburgh

47. I was taken to a panel, I'm sure it was near winter time in 1972, my last one at Howdenhall. I was upbeat, so was my mum and my social worker, Sandra Curly. She said, HCJ you haven't done anything wrong, you've kept your nose clean, you will go back to school". I was always wanting to go to the merchant navy, since I was eight years old. I remember the members of the panel sitting there. I never, ever trusted them because they always thought they were better than you. I told them I was going to school, I'd be there every day then I was going to the navy. Then Mr

MTQ walked in and said, "He's not ready to leave yet. He needs a short, sharp, shock treatment". I was bewildered and I asked why, I hadn't done anything wrong but I got no explanation. That was the only day I wanted to run away. It destroyed me. I was locked up for another four years of my life. And the most important part of my life, and for my family, and they took it away.

48. I was told I was going to Dr Guthrie's boys' school. I had never heard of it and it wasn't even a mile away from my house. I was terrified, absolutely terrified.

Dr Guthrie's List D school, Liberton Brae, Edinburgh

49. Dr Guthrie's was an old, old building. I walk past it now and can't look at it. I would really like to see it catch fire. Any time I pass I have a flood of memories. They were dirty bastards, that's all I can say. The staff in the assessment centre were mild compared to these bastards.
50. There was the main entrance, then upstairs were the four dormitories and a big attic as well. I never went in there. Downstairs there were toilets, the dining hall, the matron's room and the headmaster's office. His house was straight over from his office. There was also a visitor's room and a couple of small rooms for visits from your social worker. There was a big assembly hall. The school block was at the back. There was a square and looking outside the headmaster's office into the square, on the right hand side was the toilets, then the woodwork shop, the art place, through a vennel and that was where the laundry was done. There was then a row of about six classrooms. It was very seldom you saw them though. Maybe morning time for an hour or so.
51. It was all boys there, but girls would come down from Dr Guthrie's girls' school. I would say there was between a hundred and twenty to a hundred and eighty boys. I think there were a few teachers. One was Mr KEP He was more interested in rugby than he was school but he was a nice guy. There was an old woodwork teacher, I can't remember his name. He was really old. There was also an art class. The guy who ran that was a really good guy. He cared, he always encouraged you.

First day

52. My social worker and someone else took me there, I can't remember who it was, I was gone. In fact I can't even remember if my social worker did take me. It's like a blank. I went inside and I think I saw someone in the office. The first thing I did was get my clothes and shoes. They were shorts, long trousers, t-shirt and jumper. They stamped the number [REDACTED] on everything. That was my name. I remember I said, "My name is HCJ". Initially they would call me HCJ, HCJ [REDACTED] or [REDACTED], it depended on the mood they were in. But calling me [REDACTED] finished and they just called me HCJ. I'll give them that.
53. I was in a dormitory with about thirty guys. I was in the juniors. I think I was in Geoffrey House. I would have been twelve years old, so it would have been twelve up to fourteen or fifteen, then the older ones were in different houses. There were four big dormitories with thirty or more in each. There were boys from seven years old there and orphans, whose mum and dad had died, and they treated them like crap. The kids were destroyed, you could see it. I couldn't tell if there were other sleeping places, all I remember was the four big dormitories because we used to clean them every day.

Mornings & bedtime

54. We got up at seven o'clock, made our bed then went downstairs and this was a perverted thing. There was this judo instructor, a really big man. I can't remember his name, he would put the showers on cold and you had to walk through with no clothes on and he would stand there ogling at you. The embarrassment was unbelievable with him looking at you. Other staff would do it too. If you tried to hide yourself by walking sideways he would tell you to straighten up because he wanted to see your face. There were eight to ten showers. Why would they do that? It was very perverted. That was every morning. There was a couple of mornings the good teachers were there. They wouldn't come in and they would put on the hot showers.

55. At breakfast we all had our table to sit at. We had corn flakes or porridge. The teacher who was on at night would sit beside you. They would get a full cooked breakfast and just like at Howdenhall, would throw you the odd sausage. That was your morning, every day. You never went to school right away. You would stand in the square for ages, then a teacher would tell us we could go to the class.
56. The front door was open during the day but locked at night. There were members of staff on during the day then a night watchman at night. He was a godsend. We would have a supper, something like a coconut cake and a cup of tea. You would get a shower about eight o'clock and get your pyjamas on. There was a games table and you could wander about. There was only the one member of staff on. They would then say, "Time for bed" and ten minutes later the lights were put out. There was a little red light shining on the ceiling.
57. There was a member of staff, I don't know if his name was ^{HGD} He was a tall, skinny guy, his hair was in an afro. He used to wake us up at night time and have us standing with our fingers on the wall, with our feet stretched, for no reason. This could be for two hours. Somebody may have said something that he heard.
58. Regularly at two in the morning the fire alarm would be set off. On a winter's night we would have to line up in the square, freezing cold, with our slippers and pyjamas on. We would be lined up like the army would line up, like in regiments. Then you would have to run from one wall to the next wall. If you were last ^{SNR} Mr ^{GFC} would batter you with a belt. This was near enough every other morning because he was steaming drunk. All the other teachers were standing there allowing it to happen and they were shouting, "Run, run", and he's slapping you with the belt. They were not nice people.

Mealtimes/Food

59. The dinners were good, like a five star hotel compared to what I was used to. It was like the assessment centre, but after dinner time nothing really happened.

Washing/Bathing

60. You had a shower every morning and every night. It wasn't as bad at night because the perverted guy wasn't there. At night time there were a few male staff members there, but not hanging over you while you were in the showers.

Clothing/Uniform

61. As I said, you were given your clothes on the first day. It was a corduroy pair of trousers, and jacket and a t-shirt, jumper and shoes. I didn't get the uniform, it was on the way out when I got there. I might have had a cord jacket, I can't remember.

School

62. We would be in class for about an hour and I can't remember one thing that I learned. We would learn nothing. I never had a test, or got a result for a test when I was there. I don't even think I had a report card. I didn't do any 'O' Grades. I don't think the teachers were qualified to give you an 'O' Grade. I think they were teachers that weren't good enough for natural schooling. I think we got Mr. ^{KEP} he just spoke to us. He was Welsh and always wore a Welsh rugby top. I think what we got there was the equivalent of what primary six children got at school.

Leisure time/Chores

63. We had to clean the toilets or pick up all the paper or sweep the whole place. We learned nothing. We swept the dormitories and buffed them. They would pick people at ten o'clock in the morning and you had to buff everywhere and it had to be immaculate.
64. We could play football sometimes, they had a football field. You would have to ask. You could roller skate in the square, everything was in the grounds. They had a big, beautiful gymnasium. The guy who taught judo was evil and a pervert. He was there

all the time. So there was judo, badminton and roller skating, but all in the complex. Most people just played in the square.

65. There was a swimming pool and there was a man there all the time. I hated it. When you went in there was always trunks or shorts to change into, but he would say, "You're not getting shorts today", and he would slap everybody's backside. I wouldn't go swimming, I hated it. Even when the girls came down from the girls' school he would do the same. He was a pervert, he would watch you getting changed. He molested a few guys, but I don't want to say their names. I was getting changed and he would hang over the cubicle and watch and say, "Come on then, get the clothes off". This happened on my first afternoon, but he gave us trunks that day, but he went into all the cubicles and slapped some of the boys on the backside.
66. Even though I was young, I knew it was wrong. You just don't do that if you're a man. And the other teachers knew he was doing it, all the teachers knew. He was done for it. I think the police were called, this was after I left. I should maybe have spoken up sooner but who could you speak to? The police wouldn't listen and you couldn't go to the authorities as they had put you there.
67. They would pick the same boys all the time to clean the dormitories because it's a hard job. You didn't get picked to clean the dining room, they would keep a few boys back to do it. I think the guys liked it because they got a bit extra food.

Religious Instruction

68. There was a minister that came from [REDACTED] once a week. I thought he was a bit like a nutty professor. He would come round and do all the hand signs and swearing and cursing to damnation and we all thought that was funny. He always had a lot of boys hanging around him and I don't trust those people of the cloth. About ten boys would go round to the church. I didn't go, I thought he was a weirdo. I think I got this from being at the assessment centre from a young age, I knew when something was not right from an early age and kept away from it

because it only meant trouble. We kept in our own groups, I didn't know a lot of the boys that went there.

Trips/Holidays

69. We went down to a campsite, which was as you head towards Dunbar. I only went once. I think it's about half way between Edinburgh and Berwick upon Tweed. There were tents there and all the teachers were there, pissed and frolicking about with each other and having sex. We all seen it. We were out walking on the beach about one in the morning, we could do what we wanted. It wasn't the whole school that went, only a few. I didn't want to go back, it was rubbish. It was freezing, even though it was summer. We were there for three weeks. It was ok in that we could do what we wanted and we got a bit of freedom.
70. There was one guy from Guthrie's who got caught flashing and playing with himself on the beach when we were on holiday. I still see that guy to this day. His name was [REDACTED] I don't know his first name. He was called, [REDACTED]. It wouldn't have been my first year at Guthrie's that we went. It might have been in the summer time of the second year. He was a couple of years older than me, fourteen and a half or thereabouts. It was all kept hush, hush, but when you're in a school like that the rumours would go round quickly. He was never away from the teachers, I don't know which ones. When I first met him, he came in after me, he seemed a really nice person. He was nervous and shy, but I saw the change in him before I left. I saw him about five years ago and you could see it still haunts him. I think he was waiting on me calling him what they called him at the school.
71. They would take us out to the countryside on day trips and we would run about with the teachers and they would be your pals on those days.

Birthdays & Christmas

72. I never spent Christmases and birthdays at my mums as I was always inside. I got home in the run up to Christmas, but not on the day itself. I think there were

decorations, but they would be very minimal. Birthdays weren't celebrated, it was just another day. It wasn't even mentioned.

Visits/Inspections/Review of Detention

73. My mate [REDACTED] came up to see me, he got in for about ten minutes but sometimes they would turn him away. I believe if you got a visitor at Guthrie's they couldn't stop them seeing you, but they did it anyway, lots of times. My mum came up but I would tell her not to because she would get upset and leave crying. I didn't want to see her like that. She was the only person I had in my life.
74. You needed three positive reports to get a weekend pass. So you would crawl with the teachers all week to make sure you got them. You would get out on the Friday afternoon, so I could spend the night with my mates and on the Saturday and Sunday I could work, then go back at seven o'clock on the Sunday night. You would stand in the assembly hall and one of the staff, Mr ^{GBD} [REDACTED] came in, microphone in hand and shout out your name, you would say, "Yes, sir", and he would say, "three good reports", and you would sit down. One week he shouted my name, I had already made plans to work on the Saturday and Sunday. I said, "Yes sir", and he told me I had three good reports. I was delighted, then he said, "One bad report", and I didn't get out. I asked why, saying I had done everything I was asked and I got the shit kicked out of me. He had a massive set of keys and he would batter you with them, and everybody watched it. He did it to young boys and the orphans because he was an animal.
75. I went up to his office one day, I took my merchant navy form to him. He took the form and threw it in my face and said, "You'll be fucking nothing". ^{GBD} [REDACTED] owned an [REDACTED] The reason I know this is that Guthrie's took us to see 'Jack and the Beanstalk' one year at the King's Theatre. There were about fifteen of us from Guthrie's. He had [REDACTED] there and he said [REDACTED] and in front of everyone at the theatre, "Don't even look at them, they are scum beneath your feet".

Healthcare

76. I never saw a doctor in Guthrie's. You saw a nurse, who cut your nails and checked your hair for nits. You told her nothing about your injuries or bruising, she was as bad as them. She would go and tell them. One time SNR [REDACTED] belted my bleeding fingers she stood there laughing, saying, "That'll teach you a lesson". She then marched me up to the detention centre. She was a little woman with dark hair, she was in her late twenties, early thirties. I can't remember her name.

Running away

77. When you were out the back of Guthrie's, on the football field there was just a little fence and it was all open. One time it was organised that once the whistle goes for the football starting everybody would do a runner. So they blew the whistle and everybody ran. I didn't because I wanted out. They all came back in two's and three's a couple of days later. I didn't want to jeopardise getting out of the place. After that nobody was allowed out for four weeks and most nights we got bread and water. In today's world that would never be allowed.

Abuse at Dr Guthrie's List D school, Liberton Brae, Edinburgh

78. There were four African people, from Nigeria or somewhere like that, came over to Dr Guthrie's for experience. There were two women and two men, they were about twenty five or twenty six years old. It was summer time and I was twelve. When did we ever see African people? It was mesmerising. Different coloured people, you'd never seen that before. You could see that they were interested in your education, so after seeing what we did they must have thought to themselves, "They don't do much education in Scotland".
79. It was a Friday night and I was going home for the weekend. One of the women and men approached me and gave me their phone number and said, "You come to our house tomorrow, we want to do things with you that you've never seen before". I had their telephone number, I went right back to the school on Monday morning and

straight to SNR office. I was shaking. I told Mr GFC, and I had the phone number. He said, "Behave yourself, you're talking rubbish, get out". The flat I was meant to go to was up in Newington, Edinburgh. So I reported that and nothing was done. I told Sandra Curly too, told her I was frightened and I was told to be quiet. We never saw them again after I reported it.

80. Before I left Dr Guthrie's I was up every night for two years with traumatised nightmares. Every night I would get up and go to the night watchman's office and sleep because I dreaded what was going to happen the next day. His name was Jake, he had a beard and smoked a pipe. He was a nice guy. He told me he had to follow me every night as I was traumatised and was sleep walking. I woke up at two o'clock one morning in the assembly hall. I got the biggest fright because there was nobody else there. I would go to Jake's office and he would put a blanket over me and say, "It's ok, I understand". You would see the boys doing things to each other at night time, touching each other. This was in Argyll House, the older boys, those about sixteen.
81. GBD was one of the head screws in Dr Guthrie's and him and his wife children's home in Howdenhall, Edinburgh. He would always bring you down. He did that to every boy. I got out one Saturday morning, my brother was home from sea and I hadn't seen him for two years. He took me for a Wimpey and a knickerbocker glory. I'll never forget it. My brother drove me back at eleven o'clock at night. I told him to go and I rang the bell. You had to be back for seven. If you were late, even if your bus was late, you were classed as an absconder. Mr GBD answered the door and I was trying to tell him why I was late and he punched me and hit me with his keys and told me I was going to Wellington Farm in the morning. I was put in a detention cell for four days.
82. I think they were all perverted and they were all sadistic. You don't treat people like that. I've suffered this from when I was eleven years old and it annoys me that I let people do that to me.

83. Mr ^{GBD} grabbed my private parts one day and said, "You'll grow big one of these days". He was a bit sneaky. I was just standing there, leaning on the bannister next to these fire doors near the stairs. He walked out and grabbed me and said that. I wanted to punch his lights out when I walked past him. He used to batter me with his keys and one time he grabbed me and ripped my shirt. I was about thirteen or fourteen at the time. This was because I looked at him the wrong way. Any time I saw him I tried not to look at him. I would give him a wide berth, I didn't want confrontation, I just tried to keep away from it. I tried to keep out of his way. He would also regularly poke his finger into your head.
84. I told ^{GBD} I had three older brothers, who were all in the merchant navy and when they come home I'm going to get them to kick the shit out of him. It didn't bother him, he still battered me. He would grab you and shake you in front of people. I can't remember how many times he battered my hands with his keys. There were big bruises on them regularly. Nobody bothered, everybody was scared of him. He looked like a weirdo. I remember on a Thursday night we would watch Top of the Pops and every time he saw a girl dancing he would make sexual comments in front of female staff. Nobody ever said anything, he seemed to have the run of the place.
85. Mr ^{KEP} was there at times. He was a bit eccentric, but a gentleman of a man, a really nice man, but he couldn't do anything. He tried, he had compassion, but there was nothing he could do. It was a brutal regime. If you got the police in they would take the staff's word rather than ours. When I speak to people now and tell them I was in Guthrie's the first thing they say is, "Were you abused?". At the time you never really thought about it.
86. ^{GBD} would punch you, kick you and drag you about the place. He would have seven or eight year old boys up off their feet against walls. ^{SNR} knew it was going on, every teacher knew it was going on. You had the big tall guy who was torturing people at night, ^{SNR} the gym teacher molesting the girls and the boys as well. There was a few good teachers but they didn't do anything. I can't remember a lot of the staff. The bad ones stick in your mind. I was having nightmares for two years, probably because of everything I had been through. I'm

trying to remember the faces of the staff, teachers came and went. I wish now, that if I'd had the gumption then, I'd have watched everything that went on, so that I could tell it now.

87. When I was twelve and out one weekend I got a homemade tattoo on my hand. I kept it hidden from my mum. Everybody had them then. When I returned to Guthrie's the matron found out. My fingers were bleeding where I had the tattoo. She took me through to SNR office and Mr GFC belted me twelve times over the back of my fingers. They were all bleeding. I was in agony. I was then marched by the matron to the detention cell for three days. I wanted to cry when he did it but I didn't. When I got to the detention cell I cried my eyes out. It was over the back of the hand, on the tattoos. Six on each hand. The only time I got the belt from SNR SNR was over the tattoos. Most of the time it wasn't the belt, you just got the shit kicked out of you.
88. I put a bit of paper on his door one time, I'd written, "This place is driving me up the wall". I got a week in the detention centre for that. I used to look out of the window and pretend I was never there.

Leaving Dr Guthrie's List D school, Liberton Brae, Edinburgh

89. One Tuesday SNR 1976, I got pulled into SNR office. It must have been about ten o'clock in the morning. Mr GFC was there, the matron and two other members of staff, I can't remember their names. SNR said, "We are going to let you go today, but the only way you're going to get let out is when you leave, you don't tell anyone what happened here". When I left I was still expected to go to Guthrie's for daily schooling. Mr GFC said, "You'll be coming here for school in the morning and if I hear you've said anything to anybody, you'll be locked up until you are eighteen and a half.
90. I walked into my mums and she thought I had run away. She had to call the place to make sure, she was that frightened. They did give me twenty pounds when I left, so I gave that to my mum to get some food in.

91. Going back to my mums was great, apart from having to go to Guthrie's in the morning. I wore the same clothes that they had given me, for two or three weeks. I had nothing else. I was to go for a year but I got a job with Bon Accord getting three pound a day, it was good money. I went back to a panel and they were going to put me away until I was eighteen and a half. I told them they could put me away until I was twenty one but I wouldn't get any better. I said I was leaving the panel, going to the docks and going to sea, so they let me go.

Life after being in care

92. I worked at Bon Accord for five weeks. I then went to the fish protection vessels and they gave me a job and I took it from there. The merchant navy was like a sanctuary. It took me away from a bad situation. I was in the merchant navy for thirty eight years. I made it up to bosun. I could have done better but I couldn't do the paperwork. I done a cooking course, hands on, and I became the top cook in the company.
93. I tried to get rid of the memories of my childhood by going to sea. Getting as far away from the place as possible. My mum died the first day I got back from sea. The one big thing that always got me was when they put me away they took my mum's family allowance from her, why did they let a family go hungry. You were forced to go to be educated, but they couldn't educate you. They didn't know how to educate you. They made people go hungry and took away nice feelings. My mum was always begging me for forgiveness. I told her not to feel so bad, it wasn't her fault, it was those bastards. All those lives they've destroyed. Not just the ones in there, what about their families.
94. I remember being out at sea and when I came back I bumped into someone I had been in Guthrie's with. He told me that someone we had been in Guthrie's with had been on the local radio as he had been sent to prison for child molesting. His name was [REDACTED] and he was one of the older pupils when I was there. He was thick as thieves with [REDACTED] GFC and other teachers. Nobody ever mucked about with him, he was always a bit of a loner. Everybody had their doubts about him. He got

special treatment from ^{GFC} [REDACTED] and the others. The guy who told me about [REDACTED] is good friend of mine but I don't want to mention his name. He had been keeping in touch with a few from Guthrie's and I couldn't do that with being at sea.

95. I married when I was twenty one and we had six children, five girls and a boy. My wife and I ended up splitting up but we did it amicably. One of my daughters was severely dyslexic. She was so traumatised and had troubles on her mind. She ended up turning to drugs and she overdosed and died. I identified her body. I went to meetings getting her dyslexia checked out. I tried to help her in many ways, but she was always in a dark, dark place and she left. I just wish I was more educated.
96. My ex-wife's name is [REDACTED] and we parted on good terms. I go for a cup of tea with her now. There's no animosity because even though I was away for fifteen years, I still gave her money for the kids. I have a great relationship with my kids. They are my life. I'm not like a dad to them, I'm like their pal.
97. I left the merchant navy and worked in Germany for a year and a half. I've been back in Scotland for two years and I work for a company delivering car parts. I did stay in Portugal for fifteen years. I've been with my partner [REDACTED] for fifteen years. I have a good life, as good as it could be and I've got lots of friends.

Impact

98. Even now I wake up at night a lot sweating, thinking I'm back in Guthrie's. My wife dries my head with a towel. That's happened for years, even when I was at sea. It's had a horrendous impact on me. I try to maintain a positive attitude, but one, two, three weeks might pass and all of a sudden it just hits me. It's like my mind doesn't want me to forget it.
99. I've woke up so many times thinking I was in Guthrie's. I could watch horror films, I don't like them, but the worst horror film isn't as bad as the horrors of Guthrie's. A minute was like an hour, an hour like a day and every one of those minutes was like a nightmare to me. I would tell my mum it was ok, not wanting her to worry.

100. About twenty years ago I was wanting to take those bastards to court, but who would believe you, who would you get in contact with?
101. It feels like it's happening now. You have to remind yourself that it's in the past. I seldom dream apart from a prominent dream from Guthrie's and the assessment centre. They were two nightmares, which I thought were never going to end. A couple of times I wanted to end it at Guthrie's. You got out on a Saturday and back on a Sunday and you're abused all week. I said to my mates, "I'd rather be dead". Nobody should feel like that. I'm glad now I've got a chance to say it.
102. I am nearly sixty years old and I got out of Guthrie's when I sixteen, so for forty-three years it has never left me. I have good times, but it never goes away. Those two people have destroyed me. Some murderers get less time than I did for stealing a watch, that I never did.
103. Out of the whole of Dr Guthrie's I was the only one who didn't go to prison. Jake the handyman and [REDACTED] the gardener told me. I saw them years later up at Gilmerton. They have always said I should never have been put away in the first place. That made me feel good.

Reporting of Abuse

104. I've never reported the abuse I suffered to the police or any other organisation. I did speak with Sandra Curly at times, but all that was said was that I should keep my nose clean.

Records

105. I've never applied for my records. I wouldn't know who to contact.

Lessons to be Learned

- 106. The government should have more input into care. Someone properly vetted, not in the government, but appointed by them, should go into these places unannounced. Not this contacting a place and telling them they'll be coming in a week's time.

- 107. I would like to see some of the people from Howdenhall and Dr Guthrie's eye to eye and ask them how they sleep at night after what they've done to kids and tell them how many lives they've destroyed. I was eleven but I think I should have spoken up a bit more. I felt weak, I should have fought a bit more and that destroys me a bit.

Other information

- 108. 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..... 25 April 2021