

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GRC

Support person present: No

1. My name is GRC. My date of birth is 1957. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before my brother going into care

2. I was born in Edinburgh. My dad was called and was a chef at a hotel in Edinburgh. My mum was called. I don't remember much about my mother because she left when I was five years old. I have seven brothers and sisters. was ten years older than me and died over a year ago. When my mother left, took on my mother's job and was in charge. Then there's, and then. There is a year between each of them. HCL is two years older than me and is one year older than me. Then there's me, and. There is a year between each of us. I have come to speak to the Inquiry about my brother, HCL.
3. We lived in a house in with four bedrooms and large front and back gardens. Dad raised us all as best he could. He was a wonderful guy. My father was always the same and used to say, "Comme ci, comme ca". I went to Drylaw Primary School and Ainsley Park Secondary School. We were a young family and we had to

get on well. We got on with life. [REDACTED] was very strict and worse than my mother. After my mother left, we saw her about once a year. She came round to the school with presents for us all and I ran away from her.

4. [REDACTED] was the only one of my siblings who went into care. I never saw any social workers and don't remember any being at the house. [REDACTED] ran away from home and got put into Doctor Guthrie's when I was five or six years old and [REDACTED] was seven or eight years old.
5. I didn't understand why [REDACTED] ran away from home. I knew he ran away twice. I think [REDACTED] was confused with my mother leaving. She wanted to take [REDACTED] and he wanted to stay with his brothers and sisters. He was running away to try to escape from things. The police came to the house to talk to my father about [REDACTED] running away and we were sent upstairs.
6. In 1972 or 1973, my father went to a child panel to see what was happening with [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] was away. I only saw him once a month after that and he was away for a few years. [REDACTED] came out when he was eleven or twelve years old. [REDACTED] going to the panel was gossip in the family and everyone knew what it was for. I was upset. Having so many siblings and brothers, [REDACTED] was the one that defended me the most. I had a good relationship with him before he went to Doctor Guthrie's but that changed.

Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys, Edinburgh

Routine at Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys

7. [REDACTED] didn't tell me anything about the routine at Doctor Guthrie's back then. He told me they slept in dormitories and that there were other people like him inside, bad boys. [REDACTED] wore a uniform that was a grey jumper and trousers. Everything was

black and grey back in those days. All the boys wore the same. I don't think they had any toys.

8. I don't know if HCL went to church while he was in Doctor Guthrie's. My family always went to Canonmills Church on a Sunday because you got a stick of liquorice.
9. HCL ran away from a home visit to try to get away from the place. He didn't get off the bus at Doctor Guthrie's and didn't turn up. I found out after that HCL ran away to my mother's. That was the second time I remember him running away. He ran away two or three times that I'm aware of. He didn't like going back there. I think he was more frightened to go back than anything. The police collected him from my mother's and took him back. He was punished for running away but I don't know what happened. HCL wasn't allowed home for a while and me and my father went to see him more frequently.

Visits to Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys

10. I went to Doctor Guthrie's about once a month with my dad. It was always just me and my siblings didn't go. The visit was always on a Sunday afternoon. Dad bought me a little suit with short trousers and a jacket. I had a pair of shoes that we got from the priest up the High Street once a year and a pair of socks. The only time I got to wear the suit was when we went up to Doctor Guthrie's, to be all smart when we went there. After the visit, the suit was hung up in the wardrobe until the next time.
11. The first time I visited I was scared. My father said that if I didn't behave myself then I would end up in place like Doctor Guthrie's. Me and my dad went on the bus. It was a nice bus journey. Doctor Guthrie's was in Liberton. John Greig was a famous footballer at the time and my dad, or HCL if he was on the bus, always pointed out his house on the way there.
12. I didn't see much of the place but it looked big to me. Doctor Guthrie's was a nice old building in nice big grounds. There was a football pitch. You didn't see any activities or children playing. You didn't see a lot of children but you saw a lot of adults going

about. They were probably parents visiting. I don't know how many children were in Doctor Guthrie's.

13. Dad and I went into an annexe. There was a big assembly hall with a lot of tables and we sat at the tables. The annexe was separate from the main building. A male teacher or a guard showed you in. I can't remember seeing any females. There were six or seven boys in the assembly hall having a visit.
14. The staff got [REDACTED] and brought him in and then took him away after the visit. Staff walked around and kept an eye on everything. When I first started going, I was excited to see my brother and time flew. On the first visit, [REDACTED] looked scraggy. He's always looked scraggy to me. [REDACTED] didn't look happy and wasn't his normal self. At home he was bubbly and always up to his little tricks. At Doctor Guthrie's he was downbeat.
15. I couldn't really speak freely to [REDACTED] because my dad was there limiting what we were saying. My father talked more to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] said he hated it at Doctor Guthrie's. He didn't say why. The visit was always brief by the time you got in, sat down and [REDACTED] came through. You didn't get a cup of anything to drink. My father said I wasn't allowed to take any toy cars or anything in for [REDACTED] and he didn't bring anything for [REDACTED] either.

Home Visits

16. [REDACTED] got home for a visit now and again after he'd been in Doctor Guthrie's for about a year. He'd go to my mother's for a weekend and my father's for a weekend. They split it up for some reason. He came home on Friday and went back on Sunday night. Doctor Guthrie's put him on a bus and my father collected him at the bus stop. My father put him on a bus after his home visit and used the neighbour's phone to phone Doctor Guthrie's to make sure [REDACTED] arrived.
17. My father told us when [REDACTED] was coming home. Sometimes I felt excited to see my brother. After a long time I thought, he's coming home and that was it. When [REDACTED]

came home, he had anger issues and he took it out on me a lot. I couldn't figure out why until years later when I found out about Doctor Guthrie's. Me and my father carried on visiting [REDACTED] at Doctor Guthrie's until he got freed.

Abuse at Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys

18. At the time, [REDACTED] told me he was getting picked on a lot and getting into a lot of fights and scrapes with other boys. [REDACTED] told me that the teachers were horrible to him and he was having disagreements with the teachers or wardens. My father would come home and say that [REDACTED] was in trouble again and he'd have to go and see him at the weekend. Dad asked if I was coming or not and said to get my suit ready. Dad got the phone calls to our neighbour's house. There was only one phone in the street in those days.

Reporting of abuse at Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys

19. [REDACTED] said he tried to complain to someone but no-one would listen to him. He reported a member of staff to the head but he was brushed off. [REDACTED] was given a beating by another member of staff for doing that.

My brother leaving Doctor Guthrie's School for Boys

20. We were told [REDACTED] was coming home to stay the next week and that was him finished with Doctor Guthrie's. His time was up and he'd come of an age. [REDACTED] was fourteen or fifteen years old when he came out of Doctor Guthrie's. My father went to collect him. [REDACTED] was happy to be home but he was straight in and straight out. He had a bag of clothes with him and nothing different from what everyone else had.

Life after my brother being in care

21. HCL went to Ainsley Park School and was a few years above me. I was just starting at Ainsley Park. He had a year at school and after that he started working. HCL was more relaxed and more himself. He wasn't picking on me but was out and about doing his own thing. I hardly saw him. At that age HCL was a modern day Robin Hood who stole from the rich and gave to us. He started working and then when he was sixteen or seventeen he was put into borstal for stealing. HCL was in for about a year but I didn't go to see him. HCL left home after that and did his own thing.
22. After HCL left home, I never saw him for about twenty years although we kept in touch. Five years ago, HCL was looking for somewhere to stay after he came out of prison and I asked him to come and stay with me. I said my wife and I would take care of him. He helped me with my house. There was a lot of work to be done on it. Then HCL got the house in front of ours and he's now our neighbour.
23. When HCL got out of Doctor Guthrie's I was given freedom as well. I was allowed to do my own thing instead of being stuck in the house. I left school when I was fourteen and my dad got me a job as a commis chef, in the hotel where he worked. I didn't like it. I did it for a couple of years but it wasn't me. I got a job in England working on lifts and went to engineering training. I've worked all over the world.

Finding out about my brother's experience at Doctor Guthrie's

24. About eight or ten years ago, my sister ██████ told me everything about HCL. She knew the Inquiry was coming up. ██████ told me HCL was abused by members of staff and he went through beatings at Doctor Guthrie's. ██████ said that our mother wanting to take him was confusing him. She said that was probably why HCL was the way he was. In my mind, that made sense.

25. [REDACTED] knew about [REDACTED] because she was in the frontline and was being the mother. She had to know everything that was going on and she had a close relationship with [REDACTED]. I don't know if [REDACTED] knew about the abuse at the time [REDACTED] was in Doctor Guthrie's or later.
26. I've asked [REDACTED] but he didn't tell me everything. We were sitting one night and I asked if he got abused, touched up and things. I asked if that was why he got angry with me. [REDACTED] didn't go into the detail but told me that some staff members came in at night and tried to touch him up. He didn't say who. He said he got into fights quite often with guys and he got punished by staff for no reason. [REDACTED] didn't say how he was punished. He said he hated Doctor Guthrie's and so he ran away.
27. I didn't want to go too much into personal details and push it because I could see [REDACTED] was upset and it was bothering him. [REDACTED] has his memories to live with and I don't want them in my memories. [REDACTED] had a tear in his eye. I guess he regretted running away. When he talks about things it takes him back to a place in his life where he doesn't want to be. [REDACTED] explained my mother had confused him with wanting to take him away from me.

Impact

28. The day [REDACTED] went to that place, my life changed for worse. [REDACTED] was given charge of the house and I was imprisoned in a sense. She was very strict. I had to leave for school and come straight home. I wasn't allowed to go out after I was home. I could see my friends outside in the gardens, playing. My father told her not to let me do anything that [REDACTED] had done. [REDACTED] was away playing but because I was the youngest brother I was told to stay in or I'd end up like [REDACTED].
29. There has been an impact on me. I have working associates and my brother but I don't have any friends. I find it hard to make friends and get close to people. That's because I was isolated. I like to be on my own because I was on own most of the time as a child.

30. I spoke to [REDACTED] later about that but she said she only did what she was ordered to do by my father. My father was worried and he didn't want the same thing to happen to me. There was gossip and people said my father had a son in a home. My father wouldn't want people saying his other son was just as bad.
31. [REDACTED] s time in Doctor Guthrie's had an impact on him and he totally changed in there. He was a totally different guy. I didn't know why back then but now I have an idea because I know what he went through. He took out his anger and pent up frustration on me because I was the younger brother. [REDACTED] beat me up and I tried to keep out of his way. In the end I was being forced to go and see [REDACTED] against my will. I had to go along and do what my father said.
32. When [REDACTED] came home on a visit he was out of the house. At the time I thought it part of growing up and he wanted his freedom. [REDACTED] lost interest in me as a brother. He was more interested in getting out and seeing other people. I wasn't concerned because I was a young boy and I had my own life.
33. I think [REDACTED] used to go and steal things. He learned that from Doctor Guthrie's because he wasn't like that before. [REDACTED] s attitude changed and he became more dishonest. Sometimes he'd come back with a bicycle. For me it was great because I had a bicycle when [REDACTED] was away. It was a fun time for me but it was the wrong thing to do. If my father sent [REDACTED] to the shop for onions then he'd steal them from someone's garden and keep the money for himself. If [REDACTED] was in a good mood then he'd share half a toffee with me.
34. [REDACTED] has had a problem with people in authority ever since he was in Doctor Guthrie's. He's argumentative. He'll pick an argument over anything and won't let go.
35. Since [REDACTED] came to stay with me, he has changed. He has reverted back to the old [REDACTED] I knew and he is more mellow. We're close now. I think that's because I've opened my arms to him and helped him out. Since I asked him about his experiences at Doctor Guthrie's, he's come more to terms with it. I hope so anyway.

- 36. There was an impact on HCL's relationship with my sisters and he doesn't get on with them to this day. Doctor Guthrie's turned HCL into something he wasn't. It changed him. He was very confused and angry.

Records

- 37. HCL has files from his time in care. There is a lot of paperwork but I haven't looked at it.

Lessons to be learned

- 38. I don't think there were enough checks in the past. Nowadays society has got round to fixing these things and has learned from the past. For example, if I have to go into schools and hospitals for work then I have to have a certificate with me that shows I have no convictions and haven't been in trouble with the police. Most people ask for those.
- 39. Children should be listened to and should be listened to more. They should be allowed to speak for themselves and should be believed. I hope the mistakes of the past can be rectified. Prevention is better than cure.
- 40. 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..... GRC

Dated..... 27 October 2022