

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

GFN

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is GFN. My date of birth is 1967. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born GFN. My brother IPV was exactly two years older than me. I had a sister called but she is dead now. My dad left my mother when I was four. I attended Nitshill Primary School and things started to go wrong there. After that I attended Craighbank Secondary School in Priesthill for three months and then I went to Dr Guthrie's.
3. My mum remarried when I was eleven and I assumed the name GFN. My mum's name was and she was known as She is still alive and living in Paisley. My stepfather, died when I was ten or eleven. We lived in South Nitshill with him and then we moved to Darnley.
4. My mum couldn't control me. I think I was copying my big brother because he was in care, sniffing glue and acting like an idiot. There was a social worker connected to our family who was a nice woman. I got into trouble and went to the Children's panel. They suggested that I go to Dr Guthrie's and I agreed.

Dr Guthrie's Boys' School, Liberton, Edinburgh

5. I went to Dr Guthrie's in 1979 when I was twelve. There was a gym at the back of the building and in front of that was the education department. There was a kitchen, a small laundry, a big area for playing football and an assembly hall. There was a big grassed area to the front.
6. I think you went to another part of Dr Guthrie's first to be assessed and then you got moved to your dormitory. The first part had a mixture of single and double beds. My dormitory was upstairs. There were 28 of us in it and 20 in the other dormitory. We all had single beds. The boys were aged eleven to sixteen.
7. There was an overnight staff member. She was the ex-wife of Steve Hamilton from the Wheel of Fortune and she was a really nice woman. She was having a relationship with a man with a beard and she sat on his lap all the time.
8. We had to keep our dormitory clean and tidy and we helped out with other chores. If you didn't help out, you would be kept in at the weekend.
9. We got pocket money and we were allowed to spend it in the sweet shop which was just across the road.
10. We were allowed to smoke in the toilets. We were a bunch of rogues or junior criminals.
11. I had leave every weekend. We left on a Friday after lunch. We were given travel money and spending money in the morning. I got the bus into Edinburgh Waverley and the train back home. I had to return on a Sunday by 6pm or 7pm. [REDACTED] had to go from Dr Guthrie's to another home for the weekend and then come back.
12. I went home to my mother every weekend unless I had misbehaved. I was kept in one weekend as a punishment for something but I can't remember what. I was probably fighting knowing me. You could be kept in for breaking the rules like

returning late to the home or messing about. The weekend I stayed in I went with a man in a Landover to Arthur's Seat and I had the impression he had been in Dr Guthrie's. When you were kept in at the weekend the staff did try their best.

Routine at Dr Guthrie's Boys' School

First day

13. One of the managers from Dr Guthrie's, who had a beard, always wore clogs and smoked cigars was at the Panel so he could take people back from there to Dr Guthrie's. I went directly back with him. When I arrived a staff member told me the main rule was that I wasn't allowed to use my boot when I was fighting. I went to walk upstairs and [REDACTED] started a fight with me and I booted his nut in so it wasn't a very good start. I spent the rest of my first day settling in.

Mornings and bedtime

14. We got up, went downstairs and had breakfast. There was a big man with grey hair who was about six feet four inches and he always corrected the way you ate. Then we went to the main hall and then to school. If something happened they would announce it in assembly. There would be over one hundred of us there. After dinner we played table tennis, pool or did other activities. I think some of these activities were set up in the dormitories. Table tennis was in the assembly hall. I played football all the time. They took us out in vans to do activities in separate groups.

Mealtimes / Food

15. The food was good and I always got extra porridge.

Clothing / uniform

16. We provided our own clothes but the woman in the laundry gave me spare things because I didn't have many.

Washing / bathing

17. Every Sunday night when we came back from leave the staff treated us for head lice and we all had to take a shower. I found it a bit strange that we needed to stay in the shower for longer than I thought necessary but maybe it was because we had to rinse the head lice treatment out. There was always a wee old woman there and another couple of staff members. You could take a shower whenever you liked at other times.

School

18. During the day we had a traditional education. We went back to the dining hall for lunch and back to school in the afternoon. We went away with the army at the weekends, if we weren't on leave, cutting down trees and building assault courses.

Trips / Holidays

19. We went to Dunbar for a week and stayed in dormitories which were on a plot of land which may have owned by Dr Guthrie's. This was about two miles past the nuclear power plant. This trip took place during the summer holidays. We could see the beach from the dormitories and we walked to the beach. About a third of the school went and we did a lot of activities.

Birthdays and Christmas

20. Most of us went home for Christmas but some boys couldn't go home as they didn't have anywhere to go. I believe that Christmas was celebrated in the home.

Visits

21. My mother visited on my birthday. She bought me a present and took me to see Return of the Jedi.
22. The social worker visited me once and gave me twenty Regal cigarettes and a fiver. She was a brilliant wee woman. She was always our family social worker. I would never blame my social workers for anything. The people I had were brilliant.
23. I don't recall any official visitors.

Healthcare

24. If you needed to see a doctor or dentist you would go to the local one. I went to the doctor when I was sexually abused and had a lot of tests.

Abuse at Dr Guthrie's Boys' School

25. A big man used to take us to play football and One day I called him by his Christian name and he told me never to fucking call him that again. That was the only confrontation I had with him. There was an old man with grey hair who gave me the belt for saying the Christian name and everybody thought he was Dr Guthrie but I don't know if he was.
26. The PE teacher, **KEP** was an alcoholic. You could smell the beer off him every day and he could name every pub in Scotland. He always wore a yellow Adidas tracksuit. He had a bad attitude. I was playing up in class, I left to go and play football and he called me into the swimming pool area. I went into the shower room and it was covered in blood. The blood was running down the walls. **KEP** had smashed a boy's head in and the boy was lying in a pool of blood. He got up and **KEP** told him to get into the shower.

27. He told me to come over and he head-butted me. He then punched me four times in the stomach. He told me to get into the shower and not to say anything. That was the first time he had done anything to me.
28. The second time it was something to do with football. I think I swore and called him a name. He took me into the concrete shower block and beat me up. He then made me shower to get rid of the blood. He was the only person who physically abused me in Dr Guthrie's.
29. There was a big man called [REDACTED] who was the night man. When he was on duty at night he would put music on and we would run around half naked and jump up on him. This may just have been [REDACTED] being friendly and nothing ever happened to me but I am mentioning it because on reflection this may have been grooming.
30. I was a gambler. My family used to give me shandy when I was five or six years old and playing cards. During my weekend leave in 1979 I went to the amusements to spend my pocket money. I was helping a man with the machines and he touched my penis. He put money in my hand and then offered me a fiver to go back to his flat which I stupidly did. He used to put newspapers down in the bedroom and lie me down flat. He didn't put his penis into me but when he had finished he used to scrunch up the papers and get rid of them.
31. This man was also involved with my family. I asked my granny's son to be a witness against him in court because he knew him and he must have been doing the same thing to him but my family all clamped up.

Reporting of abuse at Dr Guthrie's Boys' School

32. When I went back to Dr Guthrie's after weekend leave one of the teachers asked me if I knew what a homosexual was and I said that I did. He asked me why I was turning up late at my mum's every time I went home. I told him what had happened to me. They got the police and a young policeman came in and starting shouting at

me and calling me a little bastard. He said that I had better be telling the truth. I was then taken to the doctor and they checked my anus and took a lot of samples.

33. The police used me to set the guy up. I told them that I met him every Friday at [REDACTED] café. The serious crime squad thought it was a good idea to jump the guy in the café when I met him, drag him out, throw him into the back of a van along with me and my mum and take us to the police station. I then had to go to court at twelve years old and explain everything. His family were there and they gave me and my mum a hard time going into court. He had destroyed all the evidence in the newspapers. He was found not guilty and I was just left to rot for the rest of my life. I know what happened. I was there. I gave the police every detail that they needed. The guy even abused me outside the police station which was investigating him.
34. I saw my abuser when I was at a Rangers game about seven years later. He was wearing the same jacket and looked exactly the same. I just froze. To this day I am totally gutted that he wasn't found guilty. I was made to feel as if I was the one causing the problem.

Leaving Dr Guthrie's School for Boys

35. I was released from Dr Guthrie's to go to normal school. I only lasted for three months and then I went to Larchgrove Assessment Centre in Easterhouse after I attended another Children's Panel.

Larchgrove Assessment Centre, Glasgow

36. I was in Larchgrove for about three months when I was fourteen. It was an assessment centre so you don't stay there for long. It was alright. There were big blow up castles in the gym that you could bounce on. It was all boys but we had a

disco with girls who visited. It was a stop off place until you were moved somewhere else.

37. I once ran away with another boy and ended up in Glasgow. I was away for two days. I was sniffing glue with the boy I ran away with. I had been using glue regularly from the age of eleven. I got lost, handed myself in and was taken back to Larchgrove.
38. My brother was in Loaningdale Approved School in Biggar and I wanted to go to there but because of the sexual abuse that had happened to me while I was at Dr Guthrie's they told me that didn't want to take a risk because somebody had been raped there.

Kibble School, Paisley

39. I was sent to Kibble in Paisley. It was a really good place and I thought it was brilliant. A really nice American man ran it and he changed it all around. He was in his thirties or forties. I liked what he was all about and he made a big impact on my life. There was also a woman who was great with us all. They were really good people and were always there for you, supporting you, including the American man.
40. There was something educational every day. We had a knockout competition with forty people. Everything was motivational and there was a focus on teamwork. We went canoeing, abseiling and all sorts. They took us out all the time. It was really well structured. We went swimming, abseiling, canoeing in beautiful lochs and played football. We felt welcomed and not threatened.
41. They brought a lot of outside people in. The Scottish Under Eighteen football team came to play football and Paul McStay scored a goal from thirty yards.
42. The social worker was involved to make sure this was working out.

43. We cleaned the windows of our rooms on a Friday, then we got our pocket money and went home. Some people didn't have a home to go to and they stayed in at the weekends. If you were there for the weekend you had a brilliant time and they looked after you really well.
44. You didn't go to school but you were allocated a job. I had to peel potatoes with a staff member we called Willie Wine Bottle. He was a good wee man but he liked a drink.
45. We were given cigarettes.
46. Your goal was to become a day boy and I was a day boy for the last three months so went home to my mum every day at 4pm. I left there at sixteen and I was really sad to leave. Kibble was really good for me.

Life after being in care

47. I was easily led so I started taking heroin, smoked a lot of hash and took acid from the age of sixteen. At seventeen I moved to London to live with my sister and got a well-paid job sweeping up in a yard. There was a lot of violence in Scotland and that was another reason I left. I never came back to live in Scotland. I was addicted to all sorts of drugs including heroin and crack cocaine, alcohol and cannabis.
48. I was in prison when I was about seventeen, met a guy, and we came back to Scotland where he assaulted me while I was on drugs. I went to the social work department and told them what had happened. They got hold of my mum and I went to see her. I burst into tears and moved back in with her. I had sent a letter to my brother telling him that I was either going to kill myself or that I was going to be killed and the prison he was in wrote back to me offering me a place in rehabilitation. When I was in rehabilitation I first realised that all the things that had happened to me when I was in care had influenced my behaviour.

49. A man tried to abuse me when I was being held in custody in a police cell in London. I couldn't understand why people were always trying to abuse me. A man tried to abuse me when I was tripping on acid with him. A mad outrageous guy that we knew, who was a brilliant guy, tried to sneak into a room and abuse me too. This all took place during the early part of my life. I couldn't understand why people were always trying to abuse me.
50. For the last thirty years I have been abusing myself with heroin and crack cocaine. All I am doing is harming myself. I have an open wound on my leg. I let everybody walk over me and abuse me. I just let it happen and it is not a nice world to live in. I just lie in my bed like a wee mouse and hide from the world. My head is destroyed. I am full of fear because of the assault. I go and sleep in a living room for three weeks rather than a quarter of a million pound house in London. I take heroin and cocaine all the time and disappear for weeks.
51. I met my ex-partner, [REDACTED] in 1996. Unfortunately I told her a lie that I was a labourer and that I was a decent guy. I was yellow with hepatitis at the time because of the drugs I was on. I told her not to get involved with somebody like me, that she didn't understand, that she was too young but we got together and I have probably ruined her life because I am a really bad addict.
52. [REDACTED] keeps asking me why I don't stand up for myself but my stomach gets really sore and I have to back off. Like when I saw my abuser at the Rangers match. I just froze and I got a pain in my stomach and I just don't know what to do. Can you imagine what it is like when someone tries to abuse you and you don't have the strength to fight back?

Impact

53. One of the top psychologists in Retford Hospital said that I have something similar to post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of suffering trauma upon trauma.

Reporting of Abuse

- 54. I went into Phoenix House for therapy when I was 21 and I told them about the abuse that I received. I hadn't talked about this before. I have told psychiatrists in Wandsworth Prison and psychologists in Brixton Prison about my abuse and the top psychiatrist who works in Belmarsh prison.

Lessons to be Learned

- 55. A lot of people in the care homes were good people, it was just the odd person who wasn't. I think care should be a lot more structured and regimented like the army where you are smart and you feel good about yourself. I have been in detention centres, prisons and rehabilitation units and you need to get people physically active and involved and give them a target.
- 56. I hope the Inquiry opens up people's eyes to abuse. I hope somebody acknowledges my pain after all these years. The abuse has destroyed my life. There needs to be transparency. I hope it helps the people who went through hell, maybe by giving them financial support. This might take away some of their pain and sadness which is killing them inside. It would be nice to set up a network for those people. I hope more people get on board and help out financially with organisations. There are a lot of good people out there who need to be inspired.
- 57. 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..... GFN [Redacted Signature]

Dated..... 22 September 2021