

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

HSL

Support person present: Yes

1. My name is HSL. My date of birth is 1965. My details are known to the Inquiry.

Life before going into care

2. I was born in Paisley. My parents were and who are both now deceased.
3. My mother fell pregnant with my older brother when she was fourteen. was born 1963 and I was born about nineteen months later. Our standard of living was pretty poor. We stayed in a tenement flat on the top floor and I remember there were buckets everywhere due to leaks.
4. My younger brother is called and us three boys slept in the same bed while mum and dad slept in a recess in the living-room. My dad had converted the other bedroom into a repair shop to fix up motor bikes he had stolen. The other room was like a scullery with an AGA fire.
5. We were always cold and the bed was always wet because I wet the bed. The sheets were rarely washed. We had no hot water and I got washed in the washing machine on a Sunday because that heated the water. Mum did her laundry in the local baths. We were always hungry.

6. I had a fractured skull when I was eighteen months old. When I came out of hospital I stayed with my Gran [REDACTED], my dad's mum. She stayed [REDACTED] in Glenburn in Paisley.
7. The incident when I fractured my skull happened in [REDACTED] 1967. Allegedly I fell out of my high chair but I've since heard stories that I was held up by the feet and dropped on my head. I believe this was my mum and she was trying to kill me. I'm not sure what hospital I went to but it was either Hawkhead Hospital or the Royal Alexandria Hospital both of which were in Paisley.
8. After the "fall" I endured a lot of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of my mother and I always found it strange that there was no intervention from the social services. Between the ages of four and five my mum was horrendous to me.
9. Because I wet the bed my mum would make me kneel on the board next to the sink, run the tap and try to force me to do the toilet. I would be kneeling there for ages but unable to do the toilet because I would have had nothing to drink.
10. She also tried to strangle me with a belt once and only stopped because I punched her in the face. On several occasions she tried to drown me by holding my head under the tap. On another occasion she took the pole from the carpet-cleaner and battered me over the head with it.
11. She used to say "You're a wiry wee bastard". This was all because I wet the bed and she used to call me "Pishpot". I have no recollection of being a naughty child, I was just a child who wasn't wanted.
12. My father was a drinker and a gambler. He was always working but kept the money he earned for himself.
13. In records that I saw from my time later in List D schools I saw a note that described my situation as "total parental rejection". I never saw my dad hit my mum but I know he did.

14. I started school in Mossvale in Paisley. Everything was new to me. People were going to school with lunch boxes and fruit. I had never seen fruit before. I started stealing food from the other kids because I was so hungry.
15. My older brother went to a different school from me and went by bus. He was only seven years old and had to travel on the bus on his own. I was only five and had to walk about 1 ½ miles to school on my own.
16. I got to the point that I no longer wanted to go to school and I had developed a fascination with lorries. I used to go into Woolworths and steal broken biscuits. The staff there seemed to know what I was doing but must have felt sorry for me and didn't stop me.
17. One day I broke into a sports car and stole some money when I was about five. I was caught and taken to Mill Street Police Office in Paisley. That was actually quite a nice experience but then they took me home.
18. My dad had had a car accident and was in bed. He told me to get a ruler out of his tool-box and told me to bend over. I told him to fuck off. Instead of being angry he just smiled and didn't hit me. I have no recollection of my dad ever hitting me.
19. When I was six I was taken to see a child psychologist named Mr Brown who used to put wires on my head and get me to do various tasks. I'm not sure why I was taken to see him but, looking back, I thought it was quite barbaric putting wires on my head. I have no recollection of social workers ever getting involved with our family during these years.
20. It was about 1972 when we moved to [REDACTED] in Gallowhill, Paisley. It was such a change. It was a nicer house with hot water and a garden in which we could run wild. My sister [REDACTED] was born [REDACTED] 1972. I was about seven when we moved there and was in a wee world of my own. I was stealing a lot.

21. I recall I stole a bike once and got caught by the police when I was riding it along the M8. They took me home and told my dad to give me a thrashing but he never did.
22. When I was about nine my mother was on tablets. I took an overdose of them after an argument I had with my brother. I then left the house and ended up down in Renfrew where I fell off a bridge into the mud.
23. I was found lying in the mud and taken to the nearby Police Office where I recall a policeman slapping my face and asking what tablets I had taken. I was taken to The Royal Alexandria Hospital in Paisley then moved to a psychiatric unit in Hawkhead Hospital on the other side of Paisley.
24. I was in Hawkhead for somewhere between four days and a week. I was locked up and secured and ended up wrecking the room I was in in an attempt to escape. I was starting to grow up and was more aware of my surroundings. To me it seemed there was no communication between the hospital and social work about me.
25. However, after about a week, a social worker showed up in a car and took me from the hospital. I was dressed only in my pyjamas and had no shoes or slippers on. I recall trying to escape from the car when we got to the first set of traffic lights but I didn't get away.
26. I was taken over the Erskine Bridge and taken to Cardross Park Assessment Centre. I was given no explanation or reason as to why I was there.

Cardross Park Assessment Centre

27. When the social worker left, the staff at Cardross gave me a variety of clothes including rubber sandals. They took me upstairs and showed me a dorm with eight to ten beds and lockers. The beds were all nicely done and I was immediately worried because I was still wetting the bed and I was concerned about ruining the bed.

28. Downstairs in the home was a room for the boys and a room for the girls. SNR SNR the home was Mr KCZ, a big tall man. Other staff I recall were Mr GMU, Mr Davis, Mr Blue and Mrs McColl who was a lovely woman.
29. I remember the first morning when I went down to where we got our breakfast. To me it looked amazing. All the places were set and there was cutlery for everybody and the food was good. I had never seen anything like it.
30. I'm not sure how many girls were in Cardross as we were kept separate in general but there were about twenty boys some of whom were fourteen or fifteen. I was only nine. Somebody had told me I would be there for about three weeks but I ended up being there for a year.

Routine at Cardross Assessment Centre

31. The routine at Cardross was straightforward and never changed. You would get up at 7:30 am when somebody rang a bell. You would then get washed and dressed, make your bed, then have breakfast. After breakfast we all had various tasks to do. My job was to clean Mr KCZ office.
32. After doing your tasks we would all be put in a big room where we would stay till lunchtime. After lunch we would go back into that room and be there till teatime. Then it was back into the room until bedtime which was about 9:00 pm.
33. The weekends were basically the same with a couple of exceptions. On a Saturday we could go down to the local shop where we could spend our pocket money. The other thing about a Saturday was that the staff would organise boxing matches between any of us they had caught fighting.
34. All the boys and some of the staff would be present during these boxing matches which took place on a carpet in the big room. The thing about it was that whoever won the boxing got the loser's pocket money and if I beat an older boy that meant I got what was, to me, a lot of money.

35. During the good weather we would go outside into the grounds and play football.

Mealtimes / Food

36. The food in Cardross was actually quite good but it was never enough and if there was anything left it was the older boys who would get it. The only thing I wouldn't eat was fish and I still don't like it to this day. If I didn't like something I would just swap it under the table with another boy for something he had. I don't recall anybody ever being punished for not eating something.

Washing / bathing

37. There were separate washing facilities for the boys and girls. I tended to have a bath in the morning because I wet the bed.

Clothing / uniform

38. The clothes we had were as if they came from a jumble sale but everybody was dressed in more or less the same style. I particularly recall the rubber sandals which were useless for playing football with as you ended up sliding all over the place. There was no such thing as a uniform but the clothes were clean.

School

39. There was absolutely no academic education given to us in Cardross. We were simply put in that big room every day. I think the exception was a boy called [REDACTED] who was quite smart and went to a school outside.

Trips/Holidays

40. The nearest we got to any trips was going to the local shop on a Saturday.

Birthdays and Christmas

41. I have no recollection of any celebrations either for our birthdays or at Christmas though I do seem to recall some sort of decorations in the reception area at Christmas.

Pocket-money

42. I used to get fifty pence a week while the older boys would get maybe 75 pence. If I beat an older boy at boxing I would get his pocket money which was a lot of money to me.

Personal possessions

43. I don't recall ever having any personal possessions other than my cigarettes and matches. I don't recall having any books or comics But I wouldn't have had any interest in such things anyway.

Visits / Inspections/ Review of Detention

44. I was in Cardross for a year and the only visitor I ever got was one visit from a social worker. In those days you got told very little about your circumstances. The officials would have a meeting about you but you would only be invited in at the end and told what was happening. You had no actual input.
45. Nobody from my family ever visited me during my time at Cardross. I wrote a letter home every week which was censored by the staff. Quite a few of the boys were told to rewrite their letters and were encouraged to be more positive about their time there. I never did receive any letters in reply.

46. Lots of the other boys got visitors and many of them would be taken out for a few hours by their parents. It always annoyed me that the other boys were in for committing crimes and I was only there because my parents didn't want me. Yet it was the others who got visitors.

Healthcare

47. I don't recall any medical staff. I recall fighting [REDACTED] and he surprised me with a punch. I had a bleeding nose and didn't receive any medical treatment for it. I don't remember any of the boys receiving medical treatment for injuries they picked up during these fights.
48. I have no recollection of ever brushing my teeth when I was at Cardross or even ever using soap.

Running away

49. One day I was in the big room as usual and was just sick of the place. I picked up a bench and put it through one of the windows. My intention was to escape but as soon as the window was smashed every boy in the room fled out through the broken window and we all ran away.
50. I was one of the first to be picked up by the police. This was probably because I was simply walking about the streets whereas the older boys had the sense to stay in the fields where they had less chance of being caught.
51. The police who caught me told me I had to give them a hand rounding up the other boys. They even bought me some chips and a can of coke. I got taken back to what was called the cooler and it was pitch black. I was terrified and to this day I still suffer from claustrophobia because of that incident.

52. As the others were caught they were also put in the cooler. I was there for a few hours. We all got six of the belt and I think I forfeited my pocket money and fags. They used to give us all four cigarettes a day. Can you imagine that? I was nine years old and the staff gave me cigarettes every day.

Bed Wetting

53. I wet the bed throughout my childhood. At Cardross when I got up in the morning I had to strip my bed each morning. It had a rubber sheet on it. I then had to carry my wet sheets down past everybody, which was humiliating, and put them in a basket.
54. There were some mornings when the staff on duty would make me have a bath in the morning which was always difficult to do while still sticking to the routine that we all had.
55. I tended not to get picked on by the other boys for wetting the bed because everybody knew that I would simply erupt if anybody picked on me. There was no punishment from the staff for wetting the bed.

Abuse at Cardross Park Assessment Centre

56. In winter we were in a locked room nearly all day with about twenty guys some of whom were fourteen or fifteen. I was only nine. The only thing there was a TV and benches. The floor was marble and there were two radiators. There was no supervision as the staff stayed outside smoking.
57. At nine years old I wasn't sexually active but I was aware of what was going on. I saw the older boys masturbating and getting involved in sexual activity. Nothing was done by staff to stop this.
58. There were a lot of fights and I had to learn to bare knuckle box. If the staff caught you fighting they would make those they caught bare knuckle fight on a Saturday. I'm not

- sure which members of staff organised this. As I said earlier the winner of these fights got the loser's pocket money.
59. There could be several of these bouts on a Saturday. The girls weren't allowed to watch them but all the boys and some of the staff did. I didn't fight every week but there were fights every week.
60. It was bare knuckle fighting. There were no gloves or head protection and no rules. There were lots of black eyes and the odd broken nose but nobody was ever taken to hospital.
61. On one occasion an older boy, ILB [REDACTED] came up to me and said "You clean Mr KCZ [REDACTED]'s office don't you? I want you to do me a favour. There's ten cigarettes in it for you". Cigarettes were the currency we used. He added "I want you to steal a key for me".
62. I got the key for him and later that night I was in bed and thought I saw an angel. In fact it was a girl running across the mantelpiece. When I woke up in the morning all the older boys had girls in their beds. It turned out the key I had stolen was for the girl's dorm. I was given six of the belt by Mr KCZ [REDACTED] for stealing the key.
63. When you were given the belt it was always by Mr KCZ [REDACTED]. You had to bend over a chair and he hit you on your bottom over your trousers.
64. I once took an illness, I think it was flu. Mr GMU [REDACTED] was, to me, a big guy. He came into the dorm, picked me up and wrapped me in a blanket. He then carried me downstairs to a room where there was a fire. Mrs McColl was in the room.
65. I think it was only because Mrs McColl was in the room that GMU [REDACTED] didn't sexually abuse me. I heard from others that he sexually abused some of the other boys. I recall at the time that I thought it was a nice thing to do but I was only nine years old. Looking back as an adult I suspect he had ulterior motives.

66. There was another occasion during the summer of 1974 when the World Cup was taking place in Germany. It was a lovely sunny day and me and four others were taken by car to [REDACTED] house. I can't recall who drove us there.
67. [REDACTED] had a colour television and it was the first time I had ever seen one. I sat and watched the TV and nothing happened to me but I look back and can't help but wonder if me and the other boys were getting groomed. I don't recall the names of the other boys.
68. There was no affection in Cardross. Even if you took a beating at one of the fights there was nobody who would come up to you and ask if you were alright. I had to learn to stick up for myself from a very young age because if you showed any weakness or were thought of as soft you would be bullied constantly.
69. While in Cardross it was embarrassing for me as I was told I was in for CP (Care and Protection). The other boys used to say that I was in there because my parents didn't want me. I suppose the fact I never got any visitors reinforced this impression.
70. I have no recollection of any of the staff physically abusing me or any of the other boys other than when we got the belt.

Leaving Cardross Park Assessment Centre

71. One day a social worker showed up at Cardross and took me to Bellfield. No explanation was given to me as to why I was getting moved but I always felt it was because I had been in Cardross far longer than they had intended. They simply moved me for the sake of it.
72. Bellfield was very similar to Cardross but I was only there for a month. I don't recall any abuse or anything like that though I continued in the way that I always felt I had to look after myself and never appear soft. I don't recall any of the staff.

73. The nearest I came to a problem was when one of the other boys threatened me with a garden fork because he wanted the strawberries that grew in the garden. I do remember that all the other boys there were criminals whereas I was still just under Care and Protection.
74. After about a month, I would be ten or eleven, and I was sent to live with my uncle and his wife. I heard years later that my uncle might actually have been my real father. I think that was maybe why I was sent there. Looking back now I think my dad had said to his brother "He's yours. You look after him".
75. They lived in a lovely house in Elderslie and I was given my own bedroom. They were quite wealthy and they bought me new clothes and a bike. At first it was lovely staying there and I went to Wallace primary school.
76. However, they were both alcoholics and when they came into even more money things spiralled downwards. There was often violence and I once saw my uncle's wife drunk, naked and black and blue at the top of the stairs.
77. My uncle was a cruel man and there were no child minders to look after me and their own children. Before he went out for a night my uncle would boot me telling me that I had better behave myself.
78. I recall that while I was in that house I saw my gran help my aunt give birth to a baby. Nobody forced me to watch but I was only ten and shouldn't have been seeing such things.
79. My uncle had a stepson called [REDACTED] who he didn't like and who was about the same age as me. He used to force us to box each other. Mind you, at least he let us wear boxing gloves and it wasn't bare knuckle fighting the way it was at Cardross. My uncle was a fearsome man.

80. I don't recall how it came about that I left my uncle's home but I went back to my mum's house in Paisley for a short time before I was then placed in Monken Hadleigh which is in Newtonstewart. I was to be there for two years from 1976/77 – 1978.

Monken Hadleigh, Newtonstewart (later called Woodlands)

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later My social worker came to collect me and took me to Gryffe Children's Home which was in Bridge of Weir. It was 1977 or 1978.

Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

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Secondary Institutions - to be published later

Leaving Gryffe Children's Home, Bridge of Weir

143. My social worker took me to the panel and then took me back to Gryffe and a few days later took me on a day visit to Geilsland which was the place I was being sent to. I was then taken back to Gryffe for two or three weeks before being taken to Geilsland.

Geilsland Approved School in Beith

144. Going to Geilsland was a reality check for me. It was all boys, about sixty of them, who were all bigger and older than me and nearly everybody seemed to have tattoos. I was fourteen years of age, I was the smallest guy in the place and I was terrified. I would say the boys were all aged between fourteen and seventeen.
145. Geilsland was made up of the Main House, called the Mansion House, a unit called the New Vic, the Chapel and the Chapel Cottage. This was a two bedroom bungalow that was used to prepare boys for leaving Geilsland and I stayed there during my latter time there.
146. I arrived at Geilsland at 6:00 pm one night in 1979 and was taken to see **SNR** **SNR** who was called **EZD**. He was ex-military and **SNR** in a military fashion. When I first met him he said he had heard I was fighter and that if I wanted to fight there then I had to fight him.
147. He then told me that there were seven golden rules but the only one I can remember is that fighting simply wasn't tolerated and you would get six of the belt for it. I was thereafter given a mountain of clothes, working clothes, Sunday clothes, PE stuff etc and had to sew my name on every item within two days. Luckily other boys from Paisley helped me out.

148. On my first night I was shown where my bed and locker were. This was where you had to hang all your clothes and you had to do it in a military fashion. There were sixteen in the dorm which was split in two with Mr Hushcroft, a member of staff, in an adjacent room. There were also two night wardens called Biggins and Warren.
149. SNR [REDACTED] had asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up and I told him I wanted to build my own house so he said I should join the builder's group. Other work groups were electricians, joiners, mechanics and farmers.

Routine at Geilsland

150. A tannoy woke us up and we got washed, shaved if necessary then dressed. We were then allocated to certain jobs and mine was to polish and buff the floors on my hands and knees. After that we would go for breakfast which I took in a room where there were four tables and a hatch where the porridge was handed out.
151. We went to our respective work places between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm with a break at lunchtime when we would all go to the main dining room for lunch. After we finished work we would have dinner then play football before going to bed. Before going to bed you were forced to say a prayer and I recall that after I first arrived there I was too scared to go to sleep.

Washing

152. There were showers which we used after PE or football or whatever activity. However, there was no privacy and there were about sixty boys in various stages of puberty.

Healthcare

153. A doctor came in as we needed him though he normally just said to give us paracetamol and there were rumours that he was an alcoholic.

154. There was an occasion when I was on parade with about sixty other guys in my work clothes. There was a pond in the school with a hurdle in it. SNR ██████████ said he would give the first boy who could do a summersault over the hurdle a half ounce of tobacco.
155. I did it but a couple of nights later I couldn't breathe. In the morning they called a doctor who said I would be OK and just gave me paracetamol. I got transferred to the sick-bay and was there for two to three weeks. I had a collapsed lung.
156. I wasn't taken to the hospital and on one occasion was even given the last rites. I was so ill my mother even came to see me and even brought me some cigarettes but matron confiscated them when she caught me smoking in the toilet. My social worker also came to see me.
157. About a week before I got out of the infirmary SNR ██████████ brought me in a book. That was the first book I had ever read and I enjoyed it so much I read it again. Ironically it was "A Sense of Freedom" by Jimmy Boyle. After reading it I was determined I would never go to jail.
158. Eventually SNR ██████████ said I should get up and go for a walk. As I passed the football field the ball came towards me and I headed it and fainted. I ended up back in the infirmary for a few days. The strange thing is that Crossreach say that no medical records appear for me from Geilsland.
159. The only time I was in hospital was after I had an accident and went on a sponsored two week trip on a schooner. I was transferred to Canniesburn and this would have been in ██████████ 1981.

School

160. After I had been in Geilsland for about a year I went to see EZD ██████████, SNR ██████████, and told him I wanted to go to school. He laughed but told me to leave it with him. A few days later I heard an announcement over the tannoy saying that i was

to go to the office. Mr ^{EZD} then told me he had got me a placement and would take me out to get a uniform.

161. I went to Kilwinning Academy High School and actually went with [REDACTED] who was a year older than me. Another boy from the school, [REDACTED] also went with us.
162. While I was at the Academy I had to cram two years' worth of education into just one year but came out with an A in English, a C in Arithmetic, a C in Maths, a B in History, a B in General Science and a B in Social Studies. These weren't O'Grades but were what was called a "Certificate of School Achievement". It also showed that out of 111 days I only missed ten.
163. I used to get my bus fare to go to the Academy but as often as not I would spend it on cigarettes. I made friends with a boy who stayed near the Academy. ^{SNR} warned me that if I missed one lesson then he would pull me out of the Academy.
164. I even got into the school football team and if I had joined the Academy a term earlier I would have got on a trip to Canada with the team.
165. By the time I started at the Academy I had started to toe the line and had a girlfriend. I asked ^{SNR} if I could go to the Christmas dance with her and he took me to Burtons to get new clothes for it.
166. Prior to the dance I was in my mates house and we had a wee drink. I was fifteen. I went to the dance then and me and my girlfriend won a dance competition. She was given a bouquet of flowers and I was given a new football. I got the last bus home.
167. When I got back to Geilsland ^{SNR} asked how I had got on and asked if I had done anything I shouldn't have done. He then asked about the ball and I told him I had won the dance competition. He then made me do keepy-up for thirty in a row as he obviously suspected I had been drinking. I did it easily and he just sent me to bed.

Trips

168. While in Geilsland I was sponsored to the sum of £2,000 to go on a SEAL training association trip which included two weeks on a schooner which took me round Europe. While on board we worked four hours on, four hours off. During the trip I had an accident during a Force 10 storm in the North Sea when I fell out of my bunk and smashed my face off a radiator. That led to me going to Canniesburn hospital in [REDACTED] 1981.
169. When I finished the two week course the ship's master wrote that I was willing and enthusiastic, a great worker and, although sea-sick and injured, it was only with difficulty that he was able to persuade me to rest. He also said I was popular and a good mixer.

Activities

170. There were plenty of activities like canoeing, boxing and football.

Christmas/birthdays

171. At Christmas dinner they even put cigars and cigarettes on the tables for the boys. The school made a big thing about Christmas which was done prior to us going home for the Christmas holidays. I don't recall birthdays being celebrated.

Religion

172. Geilsland was a Church of Scotland school and there was a minister, a Mr Harbiston, who was allocated to the school. We were made to march to the local church in Beith in twos wearing suits. Whoever took us would be shouting "Left, Right. Left, Right". We were also forced to say a prayer before bed every night.

Visits

173. My mother only visited me the once and that was when I was in the infirmary. The main reason for her not visiting was because I used to go home at the weekends to her house. My social worker came to see me from time to time.
174. There was once a man from Finland who ran an approved school in Finland who visited the school to see how Geilsland was run. I remember we were forced to learn how to do Highland Dancing for his visit. Other than that I wasn't aware of any official visitors.

Abuse at Geilsland

175. I would like to emphasise that there was no sexual abuse at Geilsland as far as I was concerned or aware of. However, the discipline was harsh and the film Scum was a good representation of what Geilsland was like and I learned that on my very first morning.
176. I had always had this thing about people interfering with my food. On my first morning a boy called ██████████ stole my milk. I grabbed him and smashed his face on a radiator and burst his nose. That started a riot. Both of us got sent to ██████████^{EZD} ██████████^{SNR} ██████████.
177. When we got to his office he said to me "You already!". He asked which of us wanted to go first and he gave me six of the belt on my backside over my trousers. ██████████ had to watch me getting the belt then I had to watch him getting the same which I found degrading.
178. Later that day there were visitors and each one sat with three of the boys. One of the boys, ██████████ something nicknamed ██████████ said that I wasn't to sit where I was and I punched him. A member of staff grabbed me by the hair and dragged me out of the hall. He smacked my nose off of a letter-box which made my eyes water.

179. I was taken to SNR [REDACTED] who was a Mr GJ [REDACTED]. He reminded me that I had only been there that morning and told me to bend over a chair. I said "Fuck you" and he told me to hold out my hand. He hit me half way up my arm and after that I said I would bend over the chair. So that was twice on my first day I got six of the belt.
180. When we rehearsed for plays or concerts SNR [REDACTED] would be present holding a croquet mallet. If you sang out of tune he would hold the mallet about three inches over your head and drop it. That doesn't sound much but it was agony.
181. We used to play "murder ball" a lot which was thirty a side using a medicine ball. There were no rules and quite simply, if there was somebody on the other side who you didn't like, you could take them out with no reprisals. Looking back I realise how wrong that was and how people could have been injured.
182. I was in Geilsland during [REDACTED] 1979. The weather that year was brutally cold and we were forced to work outside in all sorts of weather. I was fourteen and pushing barrow loads of cement round the sites.
183. Sometimes they would make an announcement over the tannoy at 5:30 am and we would have to get up and take everything out of our rooms, cabinets and all, and take them outside. We would also go on assault courses at that time of the morning in our PE kits and we had a shower. After that we had to sing a song before we got out.
184. On one occasion I had thrown a stone and Mr HQT [REDACTED] shouted "who threw that?". I didn't own up and he told us all to line up. He then did what was called "The train" whereby each of us walked through a door, would get one of the belt then join the line again.
185. I was first as I'm sure he knew it had been me. He told me to go over the back of the chair. In my mind I knew he was going to enjoy it so I told him to fuck off and he slapped me across the face. I then got told to put my PE gear on and got put in the cell. The fact it was a List D school means I doubt it was legal for them to have such a cell.

186. I was in the cell for about six hours when a message came over the tannoy that I was to go see SNR [REDACTED] who had just returned. He told me that he was aware of the incident with me and Mr HQT [REDACTED] and said I would be getting the belt.
187. However, SNR [REDACTED] then asked me who I thought should give me the belt and I said Mr HQT [REDACTED] as it was him who I had told to fuck off. As I was only wearing PE shorts he told me to go and put on trousers which I did though I also put heavy dusters down the back of my trousers.
188. I then went over to HQT [REDACTED]'s office and he told me to get over the chair. He swung the belt but instead of hitting me he swung the belt over my head. He then told me to get out and to go clean the bins which was to be my punishment. It was years later that I discovered HQT [REDACTED] and SNR [REDACTED] had a bet on as to whether or not I would go to HQT [REDACTED]'s office for my punishment.
189. There was an incident one time during the period I was attending Kilwinning Academy. I was back at Geilsland and still wearing my school uniform. I saw a boy called [REDACTED] bullying a wee boy called [REDACTED] who was quite pally with me. He sort of had special needs that weren't recognised at the time.
190. SNR [REDACTED] was walking round the dining room and asked if anybody wanted a fight. [REDACTED] said "me" and that he wanted to fight [REDACTED].
191. SNR [REDACTED] winked at me and asked if anybody else wanted to fight so I said "me" and that I wanted to fight [REDACTED]. I had to strip off my school shirt and tie and shoes then faced up to [REDACTED] who stripped in the same way. They made a space and SNR [REDACTED] was about to give us a count of three but, as he started, I punched [REDACTED]. As he lay on the floor I was still punching him.
192. SNR [REDACTED] gave me a slap on the head and warned me about losing my temper. SNR [REDACTED] EZD [REDACTED] was a hard taskmaster and physically reprimanded

me on many an occasion but he did well by me. He helped me get into a school, helped me when I was leaving Geilsland and even wrote me a nice reference.

193. For all the times ^{SNR} [REDACTED] punched or belted me I still have a lot of respect for the job he did, especially in that era, and what he did for me. He taught me manners, respect and how to conduct myself.

Other information about Geilsland

194. Once I got into the routine I managed to stay out of trouble. Eventually I was moved into the chapel cottage which I stayed in on my own for a time living independently. My routine there was to get up, go to Kilwinning Academy, get dinner, play football and go to bed.
195. Eventually ^{SNR} [REDACTED] said someone else would be staying in the cottage with me which annoyed me as I had made the place my own. The guy, whose name I don't recall, moved things about and I told him to have everything back in place by the time I got back from school.
196. We ended up having a fight and ^{SNR} [REDACTED] warned me about anger issues and made me polish the chapel's wooden floor.
197. I continued to go to school while in the cottage but my main love in life was playing football. Although I continued staying in the cottage, during the holidays, I integrated more with the other boys. I started to toe the line and that was when I had a girlfriend from the Academy.
198. Geilsland used to have an open day for parents, visitors and social workers each year. Food would be laid out in the gym and a stage was constructed where relevant prizes were handed out from.

199. One year SNR [REDACTED] called me over to his office for a chat the night before the open day. He asked me who I thought should win the [REDACTED] trophy, which was given to the boy of the year based on character and behaviour, and I said [REDACTED].
200. I left his office and heard a tannoy announcement telling [REDACTED] to report to the SNR [REDACTED] office. When I later asked [REDACTED] what had happened he said that SNR [REDACTED] had also asked him who should win the trophy and he said that I should win it.
201. The next day it was the last trophy to be handed out and SNR [REDACTED] said that it was [REDACTED] and then presented the trophy to both me and [REDACTED]. My mother, brother and, I think, my social worker were all there as was the Reverend James Currie.
202. This appeared in the local paper but unfortunately it stated that "[REDACTED]" had won the trophy which was embarrassing [REDACTED]. The paper was dated [REDACTED].
203. I always felt that it was the boys who ran the school. It was the boys who fixed the electrics, the boys who did joinery repairs, the boys who did the mechanics on the staff cars and the boys who worked as farmers who sold the fruit and vegetables.
204. The boys would also be sent to Paisley, Hamilton or Ayr and made to sell flags for various charities, Everything about Geilsland was done to make the place look good to those outside the place.
205. As far as I was concerned the boys themselves didn't matter. They were abused physically and emotionally. Take for instance the good report I got from working on the schooner or the good report I got from Kilwinning Academy. That all reflected well on Geilsland which is all they wanted.

Leaving Geilsland

206. After I left Kilwinning Academy I continued to stay in Geilsland and continued to integrate with the others. I continued working in the building section but when I was sixteen I told SNR [REDACTED] that it was time for me to leave.
207. SNR [REDACTED] took me to my mum's house but she had left and it was just my seventeen year old brother who was there. SNR [REDACTED] asked me if I wanted to stay with my brother. I said yes.
208. We stopped off at Macro for a bite to eat and he asked me if I would like to get into catering. On the way back to Geilsland we stopped at the [REDACTED] Hotel and SNR [REDACTED] spoke to the manager Mr [REDACTED] who ran the hotel with his wife. He was a lovely man.
209. SNR [REDACTED] explained my situation to Mr [REDACTED] and asked if he would give me a job. He said yes and I ended up doing almost everything except working behind the bar as I was too young.

Life after being care

210. After I left Geilsland I stayed with my brother and worked in the [REDACTED] Hotel. One of the kitchen staff got me to help prepare the food in the kitchen and was giving me an extra £20 so I was earning £45 a week, £15 of which I gave to my brother. I ended up being a waiter in the hotel, usually on a split-shift.
211. Not long after I moved in with my brother he asked me if I would put out the rubbish. I picked up the bin to do so but we ended up in a fight and I ended up smashing a lot of the windows. The police were called and I ran round to a neighbour's house and phoned Geilsland.

212. EZD ██████████ SNR ██████████ arrived about twenty minutes later and by this time I was in handcuffs. EZD ██████████ made a deal with the police to fix all the windows and said he would take responsibility for me.
213. I then went to stay with EZD ██████████ for a few days but ended up back at my brother's place in Paisley because my girlfriend stayed in Paisley. I then went to stay with an aunt.
214. I stayed at the ██████████ Hotel until my uncle got me a job changing tyres with ██████████. I enjoyed that but was just drifting and was getting in to the odd bit of trouble. I didn't want to go down that road or end up in jail.
215. I got a job in the ██████████ restaurant in Renfrew and the manager there said he would take me on as a silver service waiter on £75 a week. I also worked as a commi-waiter. On my first night I was given a £10 tip by one customer and the manager put this in a jar to be shared out. On the Saturday my tips alone were worth £50.
216. My mum had gone to Bournemouth and one night I just decided to head there straight from work. I hitched a lift almost immediately that took me to London and the whole journey to Bournemouth only took me twelve hours.
217. When I got to Bournemouth, by coincidence one of the first people I saw was my brother ██████████. I only stayed there for a short time before heading back to Paisley to pick up my wages. I then stayed with my aunt.
218. My girlfriend was sixteen and we ran off back down to Bournemouth. We had a wee girl and got a flat. However, she got homesick and went back to Scotland with our ten month old daughter and we both went our own way. The last time I saw my daughter ██████████ was when she was about six years old.
219. The break-up with my girlfriend hit me hard and I lived homeless for a year. I did this to clear my mind but also just for the experience. I travelled all over Britain sleeping in

service stations. Quite often lorry drivers who gave me a lift would hear my story and take me into a café for some food.

220. I ended up really unwell and ended up in Carlisle. The Citizen's Advice Bureau fixed me up in a bed and breakfast place and the landlady there was sympathetic to somebody in my situation.
221. Benefits paid for the accommodation but you were also given money to get your laundry done. I got a cheque for £35 but ended up in a bookies and put £1.50 on four horses on a cumulative bet. I won £177 and ended up a party where I met the girl I was to later marry, [REDACTED]. We were together for seventeen years and had three children together. So I won at the horses, won a wife and won three children.
222. We ended up in Eastbourne where I worked in hotels and later I got a job cutting grass with the local council. My daughter [REDACTED] was born. We then moved back to Scotland and stayed with my mum for a few months. I then wrote to North Ayrshire Council who gave us a three bedroom house in Kilbirnie where I stayed for 21 years. My daughter [REDACTED] was born next. I was 25 years old.
223. When I became a father it was important for me to break the cycle of a child in care that I had gone through and not allow my children to go into care. I'm pleased I managed to do that and am proud of how my kids turned out.
224. While in Kilbirnie I worked with my brother in the building trade but wanted to do social work. Prior to leaving Geilsland I had told ^{SNR} [REDACTED] that I wanted to do social work or join the navy and he had asked me if I fancied the idea of teaching PE at Geilsland and running the football.
225. For this reason I contacted him and he wrote me a reference and got me a placement [REDACTED] in Kilbirnie. This was in [REDACTED] 1993. I worked there for a while getting work experience but the place was closing down.

226. The guy in charge said I should apply for the job as caretaker for the building when it shut down. I got offered the job but was also offered a job [REDACTED]. I took the job in [REDACTED] on the night shift and worked there for [REDACTED] years with juvenile offenders as a residential care officer.
227. While working as a social worker I set up [REDACTED] Juniors football club which was for under privileged boys. I obtained fundraising to set it up, and put measures in place to prevent any child being left alone in changing rooms and did not allow showers
228. Working in [REDACTED] ended up being detrimental to my health and I became what they called contaminated because I was working with young sexual offenders. This lead to me being over-protective with my own kids.
229. My marriage broke up in 2000 and I developed a mental health problem. I had always had this but it became more pronounced after the break-up of my marriage. Then, due to an incident with the police that I don't wish to discuss though it was to do with the break-up of my marriage, I had a court case which lead to me losing my job at [REDACTED].
230. I worked in a distillery for a while but then sat my PSV and spent a few years driving buses. In 2010 I was diagnosed with ME and chronic fatigue and haven't worked since. I'm actually glad I'm out of the rat race because that is exactly what it is, a rat race.

Impact

231. Being in the care system and what happened there have led to me now having mental health problems and getting panic attacks. I have claustrophobia and depression and have really bad nightmares and anxiety. I can't fly and can't get on a plane because of my claustrophobia. I've been abroad but only on a boat. I'd love to go to Canada but just can't go on a plane.
232. I also have a bit of OCD because of Geilsland and can't even go to bed without washing the ashtrays. In 2010 I met a girl from Dumbarton and we got married but it

only lasted fourteen months which was mainly my fault and the mental health problems I have had which goes back to my time in care. I've now had my own place in Dumbarton for the last four years.

Reporting of Abuse

233. I have never reported what happened to me during my time in care to anyone in an official capacity though I now have a solicitor from Thomson's in Glasgow, who is seeking compensation for me. I have told her my whole story.

Records

234. I have got some records from my time in Geilsland which show when I arrived and why I was there, the fact I was punished a few times, a certificate from my time in Kilwinning Academy and a certificate from my time on the schooner. I have handed these over to the Inquiry. However, I'm baffled as to why there are no medical records. My solicitor is trying to obtain whatever records are still available about my time in care.

Lessons to be Learned

235. One of the frequent things I think this Inquiry should be looking at is that no person in care should share a room with another person. When I worked in [REDACTED] it was designed that people had a lot of privacy which was good.
236. People who were abused as children should be listened to and believed. People working with children should be vetted and those who went through the system should be asked for their opinion and for their input as they understand the issues.
237. When I was interviewed for the job in [REDACTED] it didn't look good that I wasn't married at the time. Just because somebody has qualifications doesn't necessarily mean they

are the right person for the job. [REDACTED] told me to get a reference from the minister. He gave me one but he didn't know me from Adam which was wrong.

238. I know a lot of things have changed and children now have more rights and that the people who worked in Geilsland when I was there worked under different criteria. I believe the Inquiry may lead to people being compensated but many victims have died. If I'm due anything and I die before anything happens then I have a will and would like my children to get it.

239. 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..... HSL [REDACTED]

Dated..... 22 07 2019,